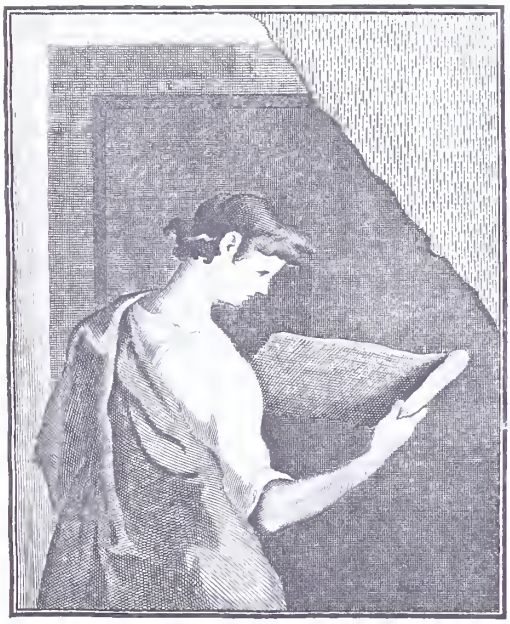
THE CHATEAUX OF TOURAINE



TEXT BY
MARIA HORNOR LANSDALE
PICTURES BY
JULES GUÉRIN



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THE CHÂTEAUX OF TOURAINE



THE CHÂTEAUX OF TOURAINE

BY

MARIA HORNOR LANSDALE

ILLUSTRATED WITH PICTURES BY

JULES GUÉRIN

AND BY PHOTOGRAPHS



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PREFACE

THE marvellous charm of the Châteaux of Touraine which, year by year, casts its spell over pilgrims from every quarter of the globe, is born of a variety of causes. Added to the captivating beauty of these ancient buildings, their architectural interest, the loveliness of the surrounding country and the halo of historical associations in which each is enwrapped, is their surprising variance. Thus while nine of the twelve châteaux with which this book has to do are actually in Touraine, and the remaining three—Blois, Chambord and Cheverney—in the adjacent province of Orléanais, no two of them are alike, and the impression left upon the mind by each is distinct and individual.

Chinon in ruins, and with its ringing memories of the greatest of the Plantagenets and of the warrior Pucelle, has nothing in common with near-by Azay-le-Rideau, where all is complete, placid, dainty. Langeais shows us the feudal castle in its prime, armed cap-à-pie as on the day when it gave shelter to the breathless little Bretonne Duchess riding to her hurried nuptials with the King of France. At Loches can be traced the entire process by which the square keep of the early feudal age developed into the Renaissance château; while Chenonceaux shows us that Renaissance château in its completest, most engaging form.

In situation, history, ownership, Plessis-les-Tours is as far removed from Chaumont or Blois as Amboise and Luynes are

from Cheverney. While Chambord, that fantastic utterance of a society in decadence, is surely unlike, not the neighboring châteaux alone, but anything else in the world.

It is to Chambord, however, that all the others lead. From the moment when the nobles, returning from their southern campaign, began to require light and air and space and ornament, a change becomes apparent. Hitherto the baron had fared in such matters but little better than the poorest among his dependents; but now, in proportion as the dwellings of the rich expanded, those of the poor became more squalid; and Louis XIV, riding with unseeing eyes past the miserable hovels of the peasantry to find Chambord too small, is but a presage of the French Revolution.

M. H. L.

La Mothe, Artannes, Touraine,
Ascension Day, 1906.

TOURS

THE CHÂTEAUX OF TOURAINE

CHAPTER I

TOURS

IN primitive times when forests were thick and roads were few and bad, the rivers of a sparsely settled country formed its readiest means of intercommunication. When Gaul was conquered by the Romans, about the beginning of the Christian era, one of the longest of these natural highways was the river Loire, which, taking its rise in Languedoc, flows north for nearly two-thirds of its length, makes a sharp bend at Orléans, and thence pursues a southwesterly direction to the sea, through the old provinces of Orléanais and Touraine and Anjou. In its passage through Touraine the Loire is fed by no fewer than three great tributary streams, all flowing into it from the south: the Cher, the Indre and the Vienne.

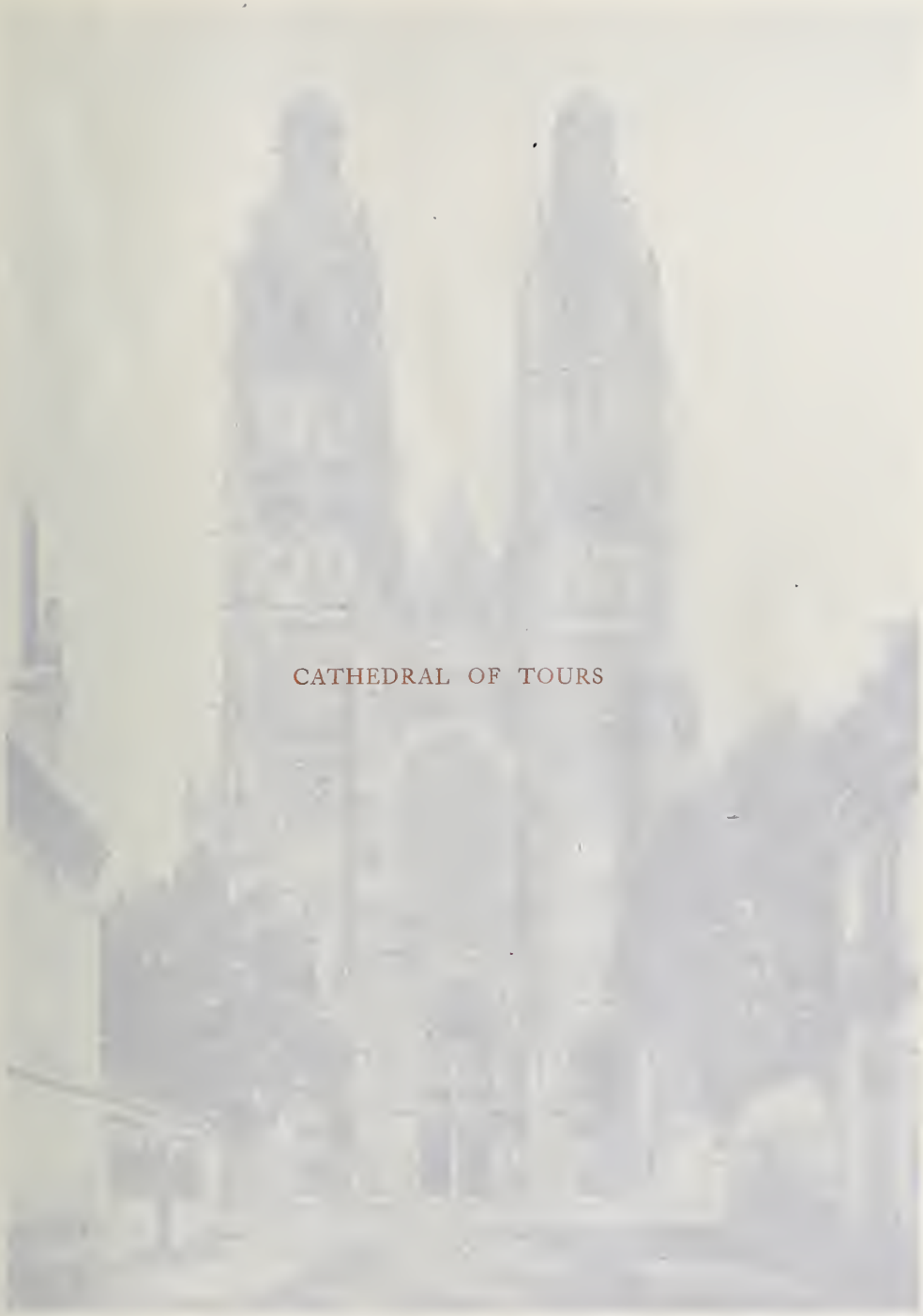
Through this fertile district the Romans built a system of roads following often the lines of the waterways and connecting the centrally placed city of Cæsarodunum, now called Tours, with the more distant parts of Gaul. The roads they protected by a line of forts or *castra* raised wherever some rocky height or especially bold projection afforded a good position.

It is in these Roman *castra,* themselves often occupying the sites of still earlier Gaulish strongholds, that many of the French châteaux have their origin. As Visigoth succeeded to Roman and Frank to Visigoth these strong places were taken and refortified, each forming the nucleus in those uneasy times about which a little settlement grew up. With the increase in power of the feudal barons great square keeps rose upon these sites which, however, came in time to be such a source of menace that, when a convenient pretext offered, the crown either seized them outright or caused them to be razed to the ground. Thus of the twelve châteaux with which we shall have to do, Cheverney, not built till the XVIth century, and Luynes are the only two which at one time or another have not been the property of the crown.

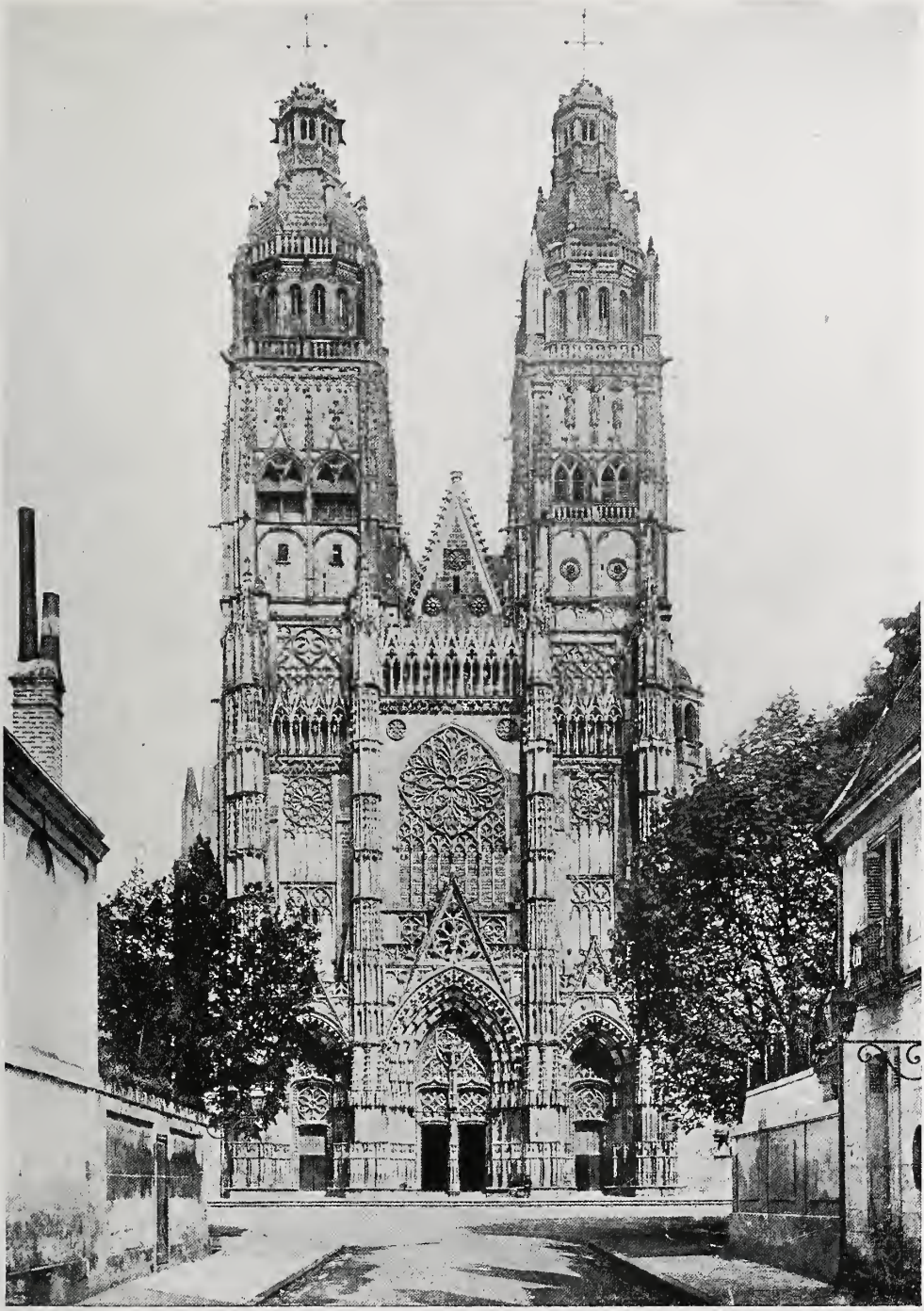
Finally, with the close of the Hundred Years War, and the stamping out of the feudal power under Louis XI, the châteaux along the pleasant banks of the Loire, the Cher, the Indre and the Vienne, lost their fortress-like character and became residences of royalty and of nobles and even in some cases of the wealthy bourgeoisie.

It is in this latest phase that we see them to-day, sometimes in ruins, sometimes in prosperous occupation, and sometimes in the cold state of a show place, but always full of historical interest, of beauty and of individual charm.

Tours, which is the natural and most convenient centre from which to visit these twelve surrounding châteaux, stands upon the left bank of the Loire some four or five hours south of Paris by rail. As early as the Gallo-Roman period Tours was a place of importance; it became the seat of a bishopric soon after the introduction of Christianity into Gaul, about the close of



CATHEDRAL OF TOURS



the IId century, and it is to its third bishop, Martin, soldier, missionary and saint, that much of its later prosperity and importance are due.

Saint Martin, who was the son of a tribune in the Roman army and himself a member of the Imperial Guard of Constantine, was stationed at Amiens in the winter of 338-9. He was a Christian, but had never yet been baptized. Returning one bitterly cold night from a tour of inspection, he was accosted at the city gate by a wretched, shivering beggar. Having no money to give, he took off his *chlamyde* or military cloak, a square of thick white cloth, rounded on one side and held in place by a brooch, and cutting it in two with his sword, he gave one half to the beggar.

That night the Saviour appeared to him: "See Martin," he said, "is not this your cloak?" Then, turning to the heavenly beings who accompanied him, he added: "Martin, though only a catechumen, has covered me with his cloak." Deeply moved by the vision and by the gentle reproof conveyed in the Saviour's words, Martin at once applied for baptism, and quitting the army later on, established himself at Poitiers among the disciples of Saint Hilary. After completing his novitiate he withdrew to a cave situated in the wild valley of Ligugé south of Poitiers, and from there he began his great missionary work among the heathen of Gaul.

In the year 370, Lidoire, Metropolitan of Cæsarodunum, died, and the fame of the hermit of Ligugé having spread abroad, the people would have no one else for their bishop. For twenty-seven years, accordingly, Martin filled the see, becoming so universally revered for his piety and reputed miracles that, when his death occurred at last at Candes (November 11, 397) the people

of that town were determined to keep his body, and his own disciples had to steal away with it secretly and in the dead of night.

Arrived safely at Cæsarodunum, the remains were deposited temporarily at a spot in the present rue du Petit St. Martin, and buried the next day according to custom outside the walls of the Roman city.

Within a hundred years of the time of his death the cult of Saint Martin had become popular throughout Gaul. The primitive little chapel that had been erected over his grave gave place to a larger and more pretentious building, and this in turn was replaced in the XIth and XIIth centuries by a magnificent basilica, so filled with rare objects and costly gifts that its fame spread throughout Christendom. During the Middle Ages, indeed, nothing contributed more to the wealth and influence of a community than to possess the bones of a bona-fide saint and Martin's reputation for sanctity was unquestioned. When Clovis was marching his victorious army through Touraine in 507 he would not suffer his men so much as to touch anything belonging to the Church, "for fear of offending Saint Martin," and shortly afterwards he paid large sums into the treasury of the basilica in gratitude for the victory of Vouillé and the death of Alaric II, both of these events being wholly attributed to Martin's interest at the court of heaven. On this occasion, however, if tradition is to be believed, the Saint was not so easily satisfied. When the King had mounted his war horse to ride away he found to his amazement that the animal would not stir. The omen was duly interpreted, the King paid more money and was finally allowed to depart, remarking drily as he did so that, "though Saint Martin was a powerful ally, he was very high in his charges."

With each succeeding age the veneration paid to the relics of the Saint increased. Pilgrims and penitents of every degree and from all over Europe flocked to the tomb, while occasionally the basilica was made the scene of events of national importance. It was there, for instance, that Charlemagne met the chief men of his realm in the spring of the year 800 to arrange for a provisional division of the State among his three sons. He was detained at Tours more than a month by the illness and death of his third wife, Hildegarde, who was buried in St. Martin's in the north transept. A tower which was afterwards built over the spot has always been called from this, "La Tour Charlemagne."

Already, under the Merovingian kings, it had become customary to carry the *chape* or cope of St. Martin into battle before the hosts to insure victory, this national "palladium" being, as was believed, one half of the cloak shared with the beggar of Amiens.[1]

The more Saint Martin increased in honor the greater the wealth that flowed in at his shrine, and the more numerous the privileges granted to the chapter. Under Charles the Bald (848) the office of Abbot of St. Martin's was secularized. At first in the gift of the crown, it became hereditary among the descendants of Hugh Capet, and for many ages each succeeding king of France came to Tours to be initiated as abbot with magnificent ceremonial. Louis XVI was the last to go through this rite.

Every such event left its mark in rich gifts, so that by the

[1] The words "chapel" and "chaplain" are derived from the names given to the oratory in which the *chape* was kept and the clerics especially appointed to serve it. After the Capetan kings had adopted the standard of St. Denis as the royal ensign of France, the cope of St. Martin was lost sight of. Two churches, however, St. Oliviet, in the diocese of Orléans, and Bussy-St.-Martin in the diocese of Maux, still possess relics which are said to be portions of it.

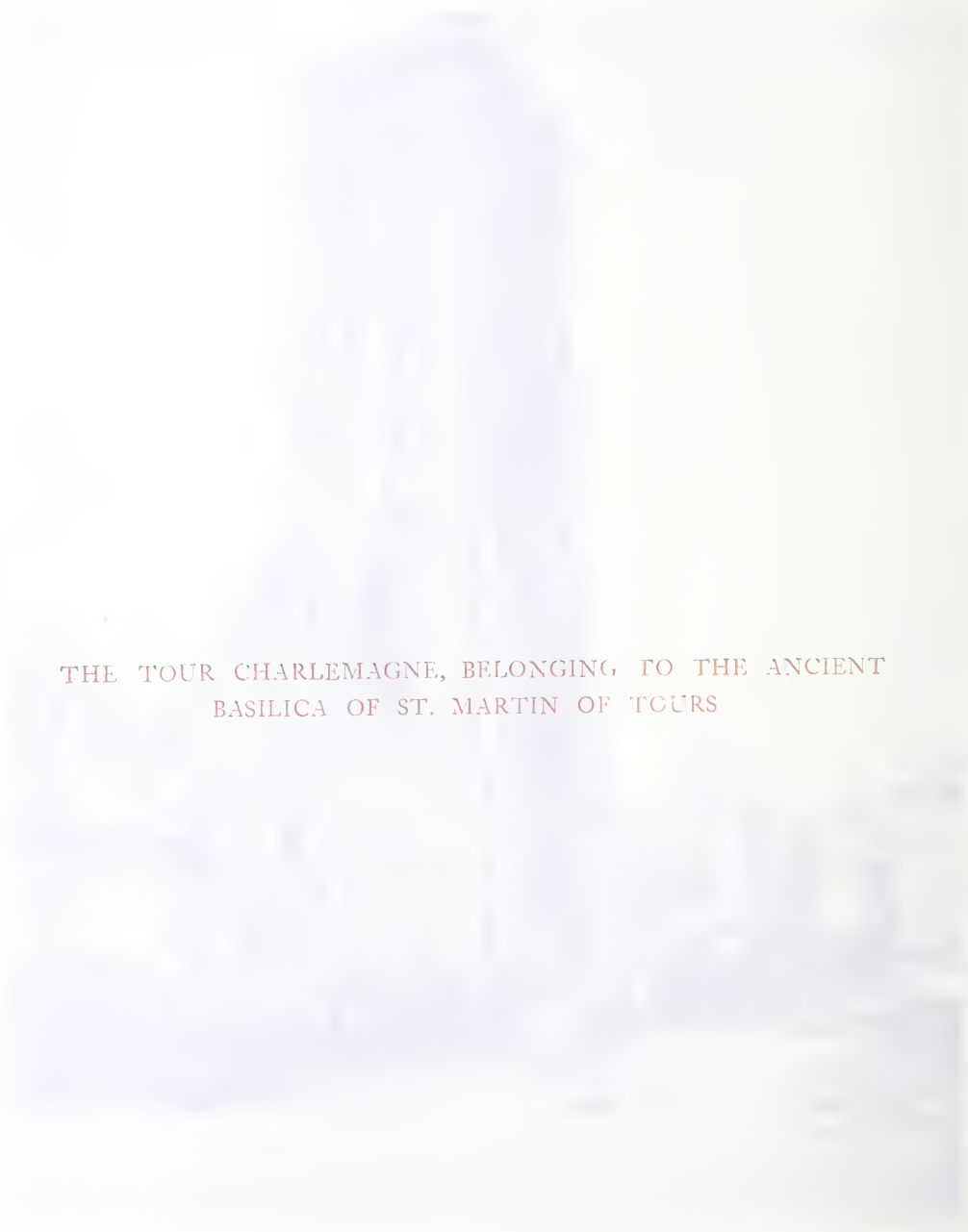
XVIth century, before the Huguenots pillaged it (1562), the basilica of St. Martin was reputed to be one of the richest and most splendid in all Christendom.[1] Disastrous as was the damage wrought by the Huguenots, the building at least remained and, more important still, the relics of the Saint. The final blow fell in 1790 when the Revolutionists broke into the basilica, pillaged it, violated the tombs, and turned it into a stable for a regiment of cavalry. A sacristan contrived to save a part of the skull and one arm-bone of Saint Martin, and these are now preserved in the modern church.

In 1798 the building was condemned, and in spite of the most lively protests from the citizens, who offered to pay for its restoration themselves, it was blown up on St. Martin's day, 11th November. The materials were divided into lots and sold, and the rue des Halles was extended through the site. All that is left to-day of the famous basilica are the two towers, la Tour Charlemagne, and la Tour de l'Horloge, which we see forlornly rearing themselves like the masts of a sunken vessel above the sea of roofs and gables that form the busiest and most bustling quarter of modern Tours. With the discovery of the tomb in 1860 the cult of Saint Martin was solemnly re-inaugurated, and a new basilica was raised as nearly on the original site as the altered plan of the city would allow.

At an early day buildings of many sorts had sprung up about the shrine; houses for the canons, inns and hospitals for pilgrims, monasteries, and an extraordinary number of churches; a whole new town in itself, connected with Tours by the Roman road leading west to Angers. In the Xth cen-

[1] The Huguenots were not, however, the first to lay violent hands upon the treasures of St. Martin's. The most Catholic King, Francis I, always in want of money for his pleasures and his wars, carried off a magnificent silver grill with which Louis XI had enclosed the shrine, and had it melted down into coin.


OMMES



THE TOUR CHARLEMAGNE, BELONGING TO THE ANCIENT BASILICA OF ST. MARTIN OF TOURS

tury, with the constant dread of the Normans hanging over it, this community built a wall of defence of its own, and was called Châteauneuf. Under Louis XI the two towns, with the interlying suburbs, were enclosed within a common line of fortifications and the whole from that time went by the name of Tours.[1]

Scattered thickly through the narrow streets of what was Châteauneuf, one still comes upon traces of that wonderful old ecclesiastical city where nearly every building depended in some sort upon the basilica. When Fulk Nerra, Count of Anjou, set fire to it in 994 twenty-two churches and chapels are said to have been injured. A few of these, not of course the original fabrics, have been restored, as the church of St. Saturnin, formerly Les Carmes, and Notre Dame la Riche,[2] but most of the buildings have either disappeared outright or have only survived to be put to base uses. The chapel, for example, in the rue du Petit St. Martin, that marks the spot where the Saint's body was deposited the night it was brought back from Candes, is a storage-room for old furniture, and the XIIth century church of St. Denis is the stable of the Hôtel de la Croix Blanche. Here and there a bit of carving, a pointed window or door-way, the graceful span of an arch, starts suddenly up in pathetic beauty, and proclaims itself, from the wall of the shop or ware-house into which it has been incorporated, to be all that remains of a building erected in the XIIIth or XIVth century, or, it may be, at the very height of the Renais-

[1] About the year 480 Cæsarodunum became a part of the kingdom of Aquitaine and thereafter was called Turonia.

[2] Built on the site of the first Christian cemetery, the traditional burial-place of Saint Gatien. Originally called Notre Dame la Pauvre, the name was changed to "la Riche" when the church was rebuilt in the XIth century. The present church, dating from 1563, was entirely restored in the XIXth century.

sance. Among the complete disappearances perhaps the most to be regretted is that of the original church of St. Saturnin, the parish church of the aristocracy and the wealthy bourgeoisie of the early XVIth century. It contained, among many other splendid tombs, that carved by the Justes for Thomas Bohier and his wife, Katherine Briçonnet, the builders of Chenonceaux. They, together with most of the other rich bourgeois of their day, sleep beneath the busy rue de Commerce, in what was once the cemetery of the church. The building, which possessed besides its tombs a magnificent altar screen carved by Michael Colombe, and a clock-tower built by Cardinal Briçonnet for the town clock, was totally destroyed by the Revolutionists in 1798.

It was from St. Saturnin's that the curfew was rung in the XIVth century at seven o'clock in winter and at eight in summer—broad daylight. Every one was then expected to go home at once, extinguish his light, and get to bed. Another XIVth century ordinance required all work to cease at vespers on Saturday; any one failing to obey could either pay a fine to the Church, or appear publicly on five consecutive Sundays clad only in shirt and drawers, and with the offending implement of labor hung about his neck. Still another ruling of the authorities of that day might be revived now with immense advantage. The beggars, we are told, had become such a pest in Tours in 1350 that an order was issued punishing a first offense with imprisonment, a second with the pillory, and after that, should the beggar persist, he was to be branded on the forehead with a hot iron and banished from the province.

The chief charm of this part of Tours lies in the narrow, twisting streets, noisy with the clamor of wooden shoes and

high-pitched voices; the quaint nomenclature, as, the street "of the Angels," of the "Four Winds," of the "Swan," the "Basket of Flowers," or the "Flying Serpent"; and above all in the extraordinarily steep gables of the XVth century timber houses, into the plaster of which small bricks and slates are introduced in an endless variety of decorative patterns.

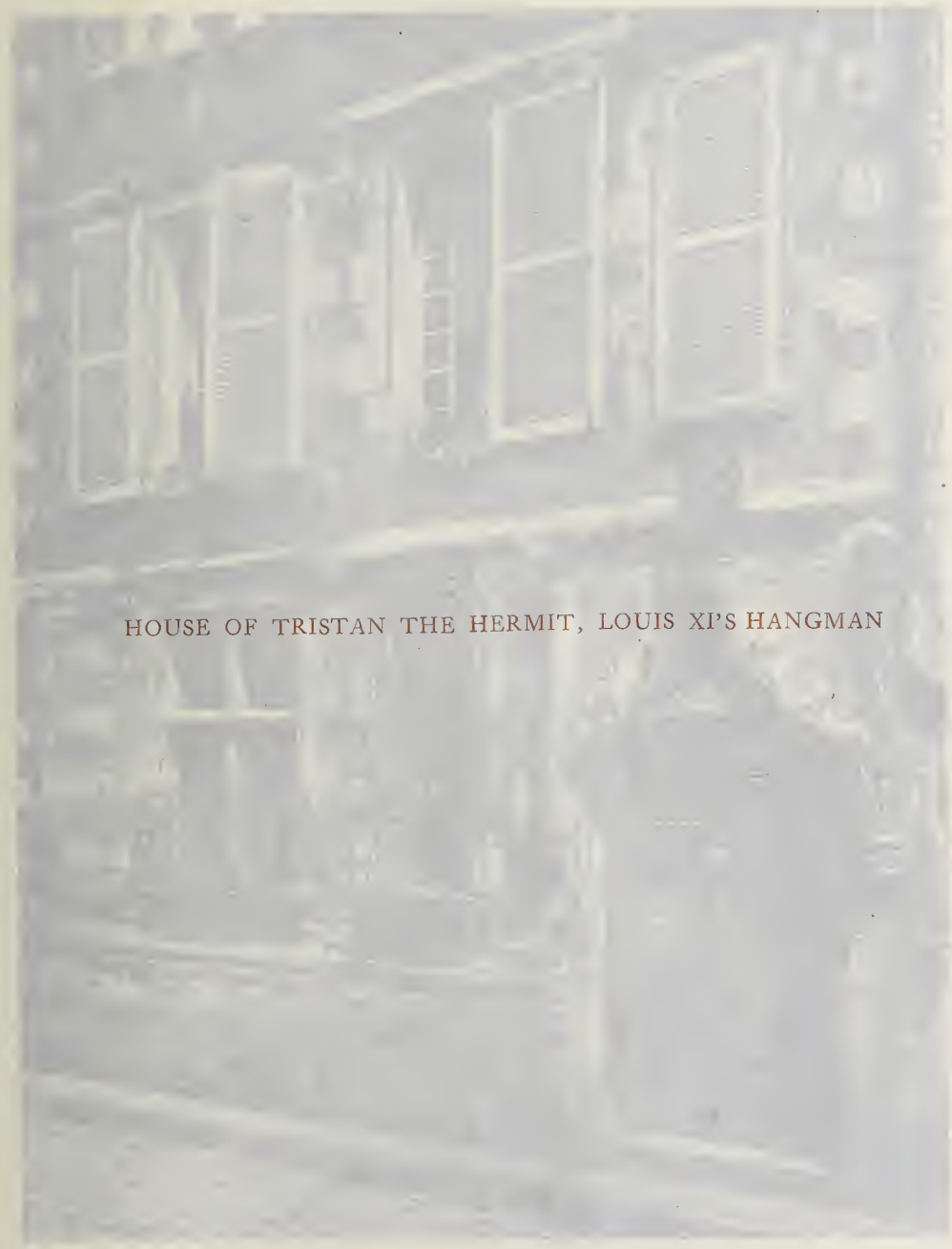
Glancing through almost any half-open gate-way one may snatch glimpses of a sunny, flagged court, surrounded by irregular masses of building; flowers flame from carved Renaissance windows, the gnarled trunk and thick foliage of a wistaria-vine climb the stone wall, and an old woman, in black gown and snowy cap, fills her copper vessel at an ancient well. Some flute-like notes float down the narrow street and a lad advances dressed in long blue blouse and playing on a pipe, close about him presses his little herd of goats. People come to their doors with bowls and jugs; the piper pauses, milks his goat into a measure, and passes on, while the purchaser, as like as not, drains off his glass before re-entering. Life is open and confiding among these cheerful people; many occupations which we are wont to look upon as purely domestic are here pursued quite frankly upon the pavement.

There is still in the old Châteauneuf one XIVth century brick and stone house which, though used as a tenement, is in excellent preservation. It is the house on the rue Briçonnet to which the popular fancy has attached the name of Louis XIth's hangman, Tristan l'Hermite. A sculptured cord, some rusty nails driven into the façade, and a formidable-looking iron hook at the top of the stair tower are all that can be shown in support of this theory, and are hardly convincing. A certain Pierre de Puy may have built it; he was, at all events, the owner in 1495, and the words *Priez Dieu Pur* carved over

a window in the court-yard are thought to be an anagram on his name. Near this window is an ancient stone well and on the other side a spiral stair leads to a lofty loggia from whence, across the huddle of roofs and gables of every angle and pitch of steepness, one can see the broad bed of the Loire and the hillsides beyond. This house, with its spacious court-yard, its general air of lightness and grace, its rich carvings, and the happy manner in which the stone and brick are combined, is an especially striking example of the perfection to which domestic architecture had been brought in Touraine before any Italian influence had been felt. It belongs wholly to the French Renaissance.

Of the Renaissance buildings of the time of Louis XII and Francis I probably the most complete to-day is the Hotel Gouin on the rue de Commerce. It dates from the latter part of the XVth century, but was restored "in the Italian style" early in the XVIth century. It has been in the Gouin family, its present owners, since 1738. Another treasure of the Renaissance is the fountain in the Grand Marché given to the town by Jacques de Beaune, Baron de Semblençay, Superintendent of Finances under Francis I.[1] The fountain stood originally in a small square done away with in 1778 when the rue Royale, now Nationale, was created. It was broken in pieces and thrown aside, but in 1820 an enlightened mayor of Tours discovered and set it up in its present position. When Semblençay made his gift to the town, monumental public fountains were a novelty introduced from Italy after the Italian campaigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII; under the latter monarch a system of canals was inaugurated by means of which water from St. Avertin was brought into Tours.

[1] See p. 300.



HOUSE OF TRISTAN THE HERMIT, LOUIS XI'S HANGMAN



The idea we gather of the manner in which the two towns, Châteauneuf and Tours, developed, is a widely differing one. Châteauneuf is described as teeming with a bustling, prosperous population who built fine houses, multiplied churches, trafficked with the swarms of pilgrims who thronged to the shrine of St. Martin, and quarrelled incessantly with their governing body, the Chapter of the basilica.

The people of the older town, on the contrary, quite indifferent to the progress of their young rival, dreamed on, occupied chiefly with the leisurely rebuilding of their cathedral, and acquiescing tranquilly in the rule of their archbishops. This contrast seems to have outlived the centuries, and the conditions that caused it. The magnificent basilica is gone and with it those long trains of pilgrims and royal penitents to whom Châteauneuf owed its prosperity. The cathedral has been finished for centuries and the archbishops, dwelling peacefully amidst the trees and flowers of the Archevêché gardens, wield but little apparent influence upon the public life of Tours. Yet you have not gone fifty yards east of the rue Nationale before you are conscious of a subtle change. There are fewer people in the streets, less noise, fewer shops; the occasional passer-by moves at a leisurely gait and you are no longer hustled or pushed. From above a lofty garden-wall rose-branches nod and wave and cast their petals at your feet. The ivy has grown there undisturbed for centuries. You can picture the garden without going inside; surely it has gravelled walks and a fig-tree beneath which the little lonely Félix of Balzac's *Lys dans la Vallée* played with pebbles and consorted with his star.

The streets wind and curve incessantly; now you are following what is evidently the line of a rounding wall of defence;

part of the wall is still there and some remains of an ancient gate-way; you feel shut in, enclosed, separated from the outside world. Beneath your feet lie the substructures of the Roman city, with its huge amphitheatre, its baths and temples, a whole forgotten world, a people of whose history and civilization all impression has utterly passed away.

The nearer you approach the cathedral the stronger does this sensation grow, and a solemn, dream-like stillness seems fairly to radiate from the great pile and to transport you back to that wonderful age that could conceive and aspire to carry out such miracles. St. Gatien's, however, like all other old cathedrals, was not the product of a single age, nor was it completed on the original plan.

"In the XIIth century there were signs of a general reaction against the double, lay and monastic, feudal yoke. It was then that populations began to form into communes, and it was then also that the great cathedrals were rebuilt on vastly more imposing scales. Into this work the urban populations entered with enthusiasm, and the sums placed by the faithful at the disposal of their bishops were enormous. From about the year 1250, however, this ardor cooled; money was soon lacking to carry on the buildings which, by the end of the century, either came to a stand-still or were only finished through the individual efforts of the bishop or chapter."[1]

The building which eventually developed into the Tours cathedral was originally a private dwelling, the house of a senator of Cæsarodunum which Saint Martin's predecessor, Saint Lidoire, converted into a place of worship in the IVth century. This church, dedicated to Saint Maurice, was rebuilt first in the VIth century by the historian-bishop, Gregory

[1] Larousse.

of Tours[1] (544-595), and again in 1130. Thirty-eight years later it was burned to the ground, one of those catastrophes which, as has been said, destroyed so many cathedrals at a moment so peculiarly opportune as to suggest that they may have been less the result of accident than of an over-mastering desire to rebuild in the newly developed gothic style of architecture.[2]

The Tours cathedral began magnificently. In the course of the first eighty years the apse, with its three chapels, and the choir were completed. *L'œuvre d'un esprit rassis, qui possède à fond son art,* Viollet-le-Duc calls it. These still preserve intact a series of gorgeous windows whose glowing colors seem like reflections of the masses of poppies and lupins that stain the fertile fields of Touraine.

After this the work progressed ever more and more deliberately. "As endless as St. Maurice's" came to be a saying in the province. During the building of the transepts, at the end of the XIIIth and beginning of the XIVth centuries, a disaster evidently occurred. The records preserve urgent appeals for contributions in some sudden emergency. Two great flying-buttresses were thrown out on the north side, and a stone column was carried up through the centre of the outer wall of the north transept, dividing the rose-window in two; so admirably is this contrived, however, that it appears almost to belong to the original design.

At length, after a long period when almost nothing was

[1] "The History of Gregory of Tours, at once civil and religious in character, is the work of a man who accepted everything that came in his way without question; tradition as well as contemporaneous accounts of what happened during his own life-time. His Chronicle, which begins in 337 and breaks off in 591, is the most curious and interesting history we possess of the formation of the French monarchy."--E. Giraudet, "Histoire de Tours."

[2] See M. Paul Vitry in "Tours, et les Châteaux de Touraine."

done, there came a revival of interest; work on the nave was energetically resumed, and by the close of the XVth century nothing remained but to finish the towers, already on a level with the roof. It was then decided to substitute the lanterns just coming into vogue, for the gothic spires of the original plan. The north lantern was finished about the year 1507 and the other some forty years later.

The Huguenots, of course, made wild havoc among the carvings both of the interior and the exterior. There has been some restoration of the latter, and one beautiful tomb, which chanced to escape both them and the Revolutionists at St. Martin's, stands in the south aisle, where it was placed in 1820. It is the tomb of three boys and a girl, the four children of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, all of whom died in infancy, the first-born alone living to complete his third year. The sarcophagus is in the style of the Italian Renaissance, the work probably of some of those stone-carvers who followed Charles to France after his Italian expedition; but the upper part, the figures of the two children, lying side by side enveloped in their long draperies, and the little tender angels kneeling at head and foot, came from the studio of Michael Colombe and were doubtless executed under the master's own eye. It is impossible as one leans gazing at the two little forms, chubby, serene, so early exempted from their burden of tumultuous life, not to indulge in idle speculations as to how it would have been had one of those three boys lived and the younger branch of the House of Valois had not succeeded. France without a *père du peuple*, without a François Ier, without the Médician Queens and Henry of Navarre!

This part of Tours does not change, it was finished so long ago. Balzac's haunting description of the quarter back of St.



TOMB OF THE CHILDREN OF CHARLES VIII AND ANNE OF BRITTANY



TOMBEAU DES ENFANTS DE CHARLES VIII

Gatien's and the house of Mlle. Gamard "resting eternally in the shadow of the great cathedral and enveloped in a profound silence broken only by the clanging of the church-bells, the muffled sound of chanting voices and the shrill cries of jack-daws perched aloft on the summits of the towers," might have been written yesterday.

Close by the little house under the huge flying-buttress is the cloister, all ruined and neglected, its beautiful galleries enclosed, its little chapel, belonging to the song school, a lumber-room; but still preserving in one corner a spiral stair, carved and garlanded in the gracious manner of the Renaissance.

On the south and close to the cathedral is a part of the old Archevêché, with an outside pulpit or tribune from which the decisions of the ecclesiastical court of justice were announced. Judging from the engravings preserved of it, this pulpit must have been charming before it was restored. Above the walls of the Archevêché gardens on the other side of the place, rises an ancient tower once a part of the Gallo-Roman wall of defence of the IIId or IVth century. It was from this tower that the archbishops formerly derived their feudal title of baron, and it may have been preserved on that account.

These archbishops of the Middle Ages and the centuries succeeding were tremendous personages. One has only to read an account of an installation to realize something of the enormous power, temporal and spiritual, wielded by these great princes of the Church. At the state banquet, for instance, which the canons and clergy, both of St. Martin's and the cathedral, attended as guests, the great lords came as feudatories and performed menial services for which they received compensation! The Seigneur de Marmande, who overlooked the preparation of the food, received in return all the utensils; the

lord of Amboise set the table and was given the gold and silver plate; the Sieur de l'Ile Bouchard washed the new Archbishop's hands and received his ring; he of Ussé carved, and was given the cutlery and so on. Notwithstanding the perquisites, however, the barons finally revolted against the feudal obligation implied in these acts and they were abolished.

The entrance to the Archbishop's garden is on the place de l'Archevêché by a monumental gate-way, built out of a triumphal arch erected in honor of Louis XIV and taken down when the rue Royale, or Nationale, was extended. Sometimes this gate stands open and you may see a magnificent cedar of Lebanon just within, rising in the middle of a grassy circle, but the rest of the big gardens as well as the lower and original part of the feudal tower, will be hidden from you until the day that you climb the three hundred and three steps leading to the south lantern of St. Gatien's and look down at them from above. In the late hours of a summer afternoon, when the shadows are beginning to lengthen, and the whole land lies bathed in slanting showers of gold, Tours, spread map-wise at your feet, presents a scene of quite indescribable loveliness. There you shall see the shimmering silver of the Loire, the opposite hill-sides crowned with white villas; the grey old Tour de Guise starting up from amid its surrounding bed of foliage, the deserted rue de la Psalterie sheer below, over-arched by the two mighty flying-buttresses and skirting the cloister and song-school; the quaint old-world court-yard of a near-by convent, where the sisters, in their white woolen gowns and flapping caps, hasten back and forth domestically occupied with pots and sauce-pans; the square tower of St. Julien's and beyond it those two other great towers of old St. Martin's which harmonize so admirably with the dome of the modern basilica;

and the verdant masses of the squares and boulevards, and the gardens—the garden of l'hôtel de M. le Général, of the Préfecture, of l'Archevêché and of the Petit Seminaire. In the Archevêché, the nearest of all, are pleasant, shady walks, flower beds, groves of ancient trees and long, straight terraces laid out on the summits of the massive and lofty walls of defence of old Turonia. All about you stretches a wilderness of grey sculptured stone; grim gargoyles start from beneath your feet, and even there, close to the sky as it seems, where none but chance tourists ever stray, is the same luxuriance of carving, the same abandonment and wealth of detail that appeared so marvellous in the lower and frequented parts of the cathedral.

You will linger long, and carry away with you a memory that not years or distance shall efface.

MARMOUTIER
THE TOUR DE GUISE
PLESSIS-LES-TOURS
ST. PIERRE DES CORPS

CHAPTER II

TOURS (*Continued*); MARMOUTIER; THE TOUR DE GUISE; PLESSIS-LES-TOURS; ST. PIERRE DES CORPS

WHEN Saint Martin became Bishop of Tours his "palace" was a little hut alongside the primitive church. Its only furniture was a wooden stool and the earth served him for a bed. Rude and ascetic as these surroundings were, the dwelling was nevertheless situated in the very heart of the noisy, bustling Roman city, and close to the baths and amphitheatre, and the new Bishop, fresh from his hermit life in the valley of Ligugé, felt the stir and confusion to be intolerable. On the other side of the river, a mile or two above the town, he found some of those caves hewn out of the rock such as the inhabitants along the banks of the Loire use as dwellings to this day, and there he established a retreat for himself and his followers, which quickly developed into a monastery under the name of Marmoutier—*Majus Monasterium*—and became in time one of the most famous religious houses in France.

It was here that Pope Urban II stayed in 1096, when he came to preside over the Council of Tours; and on Sunday, 9 March, he preached the first Crusade from a platform erected on the river-bank to an enormous multitude. Fulk le Jeune, Count of Anjou and Touraine, was among those who took the Cross and received the papal blessing.

In the period of Marmoutier's greatest opulence, that is, the XIth-XIIIth centuries, a magnificent abbey church was erected with monastic buildings and a fortified enclosing wall; of these the Revolution has left nothing except a very striking bit of feudal architecture, the lower part of a square tower and the *Portail de la Crosse,* as it is called, through which none but the mitred abbot of Marmoutier might pass, built in 1220 by the then abbot, Hughes des Roches.

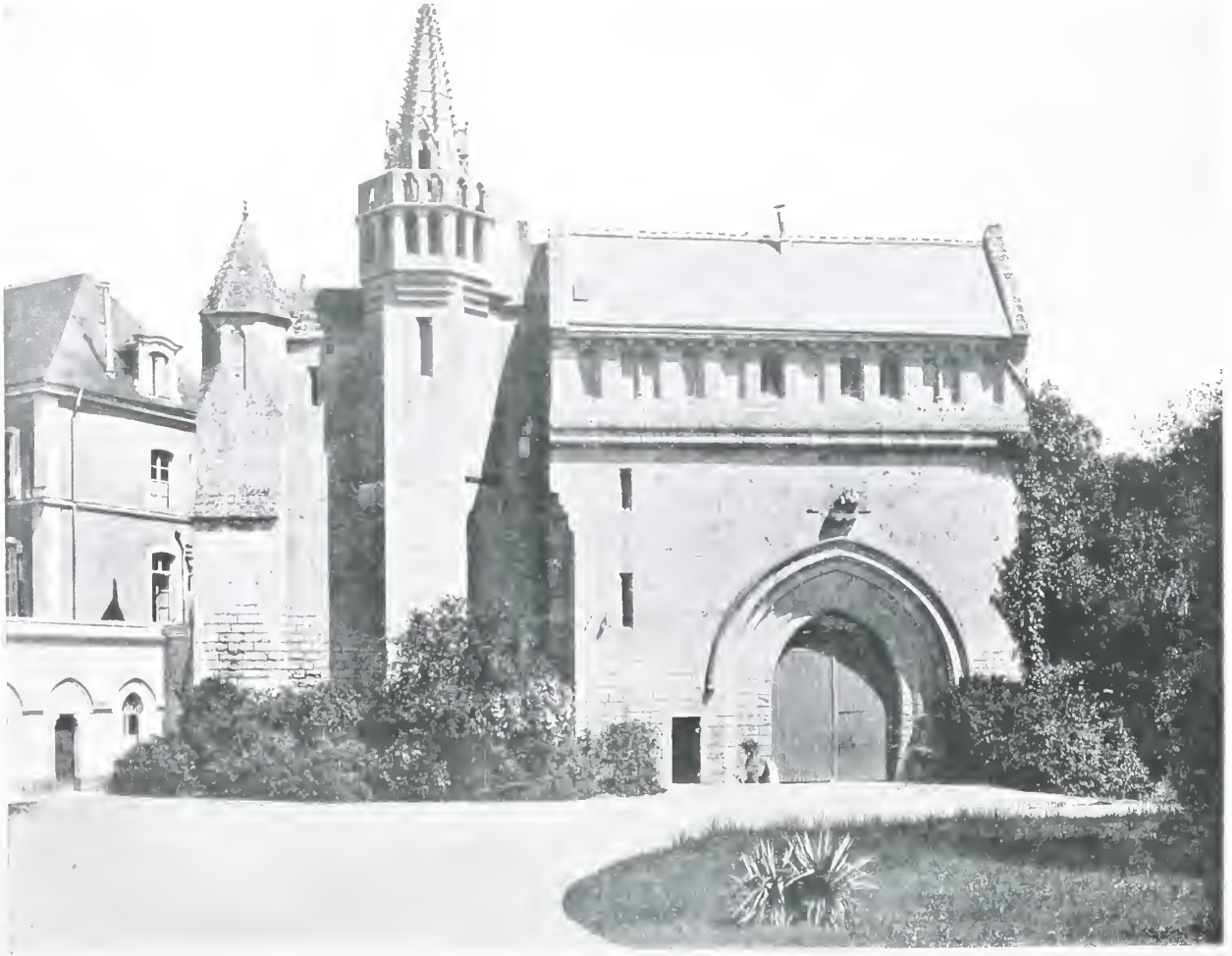
In the XIXth century Marmoutier passed into the hands of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart. They put up extensive and ugly buildings and conducted a large *Pensionnat de Jeunes Filles.* Under the law of 7 July, 1904, however, this has been closed,[1] and it is now quite melancholy to wander through the neglected gardens and dismantled chapels while the concierge, a dear old lady with rosy cheeks and a stiff white cap, pours out a dirge-like recital of all the departed grandeurs.

You climb up and down little flights of steep stone steps, and visit the grottoes and the caves of Saint Martin and Saint Brice—"a great sinner, but glorious in his repentance"—and of the seven brethren, all members of the community, who, dying upon the same day, preserved so life-like an appearance that they were called the Seven Sleepers; but all of these places have been fitted up with altars and images and artificial flowers, and having in consequence quite lost their primitive appearance are not very repaying.

You may return from Marmoutier to Tours by the suspension bridge of St. Symphorien, built upon the site of a very

[1] "Loi relative à la suppression de l'enseignement congréganiste.

"Art. I.—L'enseignement de tout orde et de toute nature est interdit en France aux Congrégations. Les Congrégations autorisées à titre de congrégations exclusivement enseignantes seront supprimées dans un delar maximum de dix ans," etc., etc.



PORTAL OF THE CROSS, ABBEY OF MARMOUTIER

early bridge of boats. Crowds of pilgrims on their way to and from the shrine of Saint Martin used to pass over this bridge and accidents so frequently happened in times of flood that in 1034 Odo II, Count of Blois and Touraine, *pour être agréable à Dieu, utile à la postérité, et sur les instances et les soins de sa femme,* built a handsome bridge of stone, the first of its class in France.[1] The substructures of this bridge can still be seen just below the surface of the water a little up-stream. King Henry I exempted the new bridge in perpetuity from all tolls, a privilege which does not, however, extend to its successor.

On the south, Count Odo's bridge was defended by a massive round tower, built on Gallo-Roman foundations and forming later on a part of the fortifications of the royal château. This tower, which is still standing, has gone by the name of the Tour de Guise ever since the young Duke of Guise hardily escaped from it three years after his father's murder at Blois, 23 December, 1588. The Duke had attended Mass on Assumption Day, 1591, and on his return he proposed to his guards a race to the top of this tower. Readily outstripping them, he gained his own apartment, closed and barred a heavy door which had been especially constructed to prevent his escape, and making fast one end of a rope which had been slipped in among his clothes by the washerwoman, he slid down from the window.

The alarm had been given and he was fired upon; he fell fifteen feet, lost his hat and injured one knee, yet he managed to flee swiftly along the deserted strip of sand between the river and the town-wall, pursued all the while by the persistent cries of an old woman who kept shrilling: "The Guise is running away! The Guise is running away!"

[1] The bridge of Avignon, sometimes cited as the first long stone bridge in France, dates only from 1170.

Meeting a miller leading his horse to water, he leaped upon the animal's back and rode quickly off while the owner stood stupidly staring after him; but his next encounter threatened for a moment to put an end to the adventure. There suddenly swung into view, riding rapidly toward him, an armed and mounted soldier, who halted, blocking the way. Mistaking him for one of the castle guards sent to intercept him, the Duke, without waiting for the other to speak, offered to surrender and return to the château.

"Why, who are you?" stammered the man, gazing at him blankly. The Duke told him, whereupon to his utter stupefaction the soldier hastily dismounted, saluted, and insisted on giving him his horse, a better one than the miller's. It turned out that he was an old member of the League.[1] The Duke got safely away and the Governor of the château expended his activity in securely walling up the window from which the prisoner escaped.

The Tour de Guise, as has been said, was once a part of the royal château, built, or, at all events, greatly added to, by Henry II, King of England, and hereditary Count of Anjou, whose ancestors had likewise added Touraine to their domains.

"No other one of its rulers," writes a modern historian,[2] "count, duke or king, rendered more eminent services to Tours, or better deserved the gratitude of its people." He fortified several of the suburbs, built bridges, constructed roads, protected the town from roving bands of freebooters, founded several abbeys, built or repaired a number of churches and the royal château, and made generous gifts to the hospitals.

[1] See p. 48.

[2] M. Ch. V. Langlois, in Lavisse's *Histoire de la France*. Vol. III, part I.

During a terrible famine in 1176 he for three months fed upwards of ten thousand persons at his own cost.

Loyalty to her Angevin rulers cost Tours dear in the end, however, for throughout all the period of struggle before the Plantagenet kings of England were definitely driven from the continent, the citizens of Tours had a miserable time of it. A letter written in 1209 speaks of the "scourge of war that has again fallen upon us. Misfortunes of every kind and sort have utterly effaced the beauty and prosperity of our city. Tours, once so rich, so gay and populous, is reduced to such a condition that on all sides you see nothing but poverty, wretchedness and misery."

This unhappy state of things continued, moreover, throughout most of the period of the English wars. Isabelle of Bavaria made Tours the seat of her intrigues against her own son, the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII, and was for a time confined in the château. Feigning a desire to go into retreat at Marmoutier, she notified the Duke of Burgundy, who promptly appeared with a strong force and carried her off to Paris.[1]

In 1416 Touraine was given to the Dauphin in appanage and the year after his accession (1422) he bestowed it upon his Queen, Marie of Anjou, as an "advance on her dowry." It was soon taken away again, however, and given to Archibald, Earl of Douglas, who was created Duke of Touraine as a reward for his services against the English. The townspeople appear to have accepted this transfer with satisfaction, and the *corps de ville* resolved to make their new Duke a gift "in which every one should have a part." They voted him, accordingly, ten pipes of wine, six "muids," or wagon-loads, of hay, a hundred pounds of wax, fifty sheep, and four fat oxen.

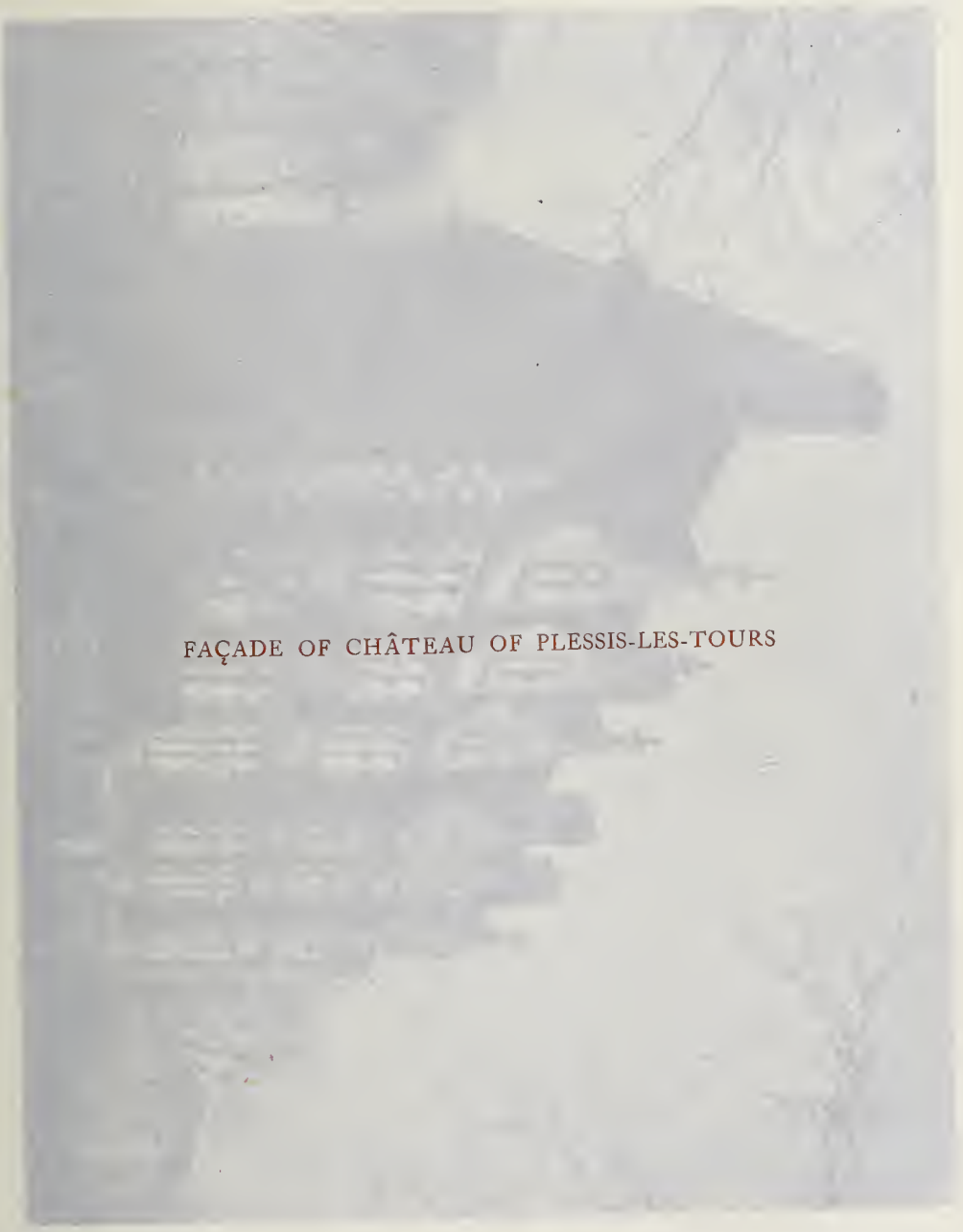
[1] See p. 122.

Douglas made his state entry on the 7th May, 1424, by the Porte de la Riche; the keys of the town were presented to him, all the streets through which he passed were richly decorated, and four prominent bourgeois were appointed to precede him as far as Loches, his next stopping place. He did not enjoy his new possession long, however, for he was killed three months later (17th August, 1424) at the battle of Verneuil. Touraine then passed to the Duke of Anjou.

With the exception of the Tour de Guise and one or two other towers, all incorporated in the Guise barracks, the old royal château has completely disappeared. After Charles VIIth's time the sovereigns lived there but rarely, preferring, when they came to Tours, to stay at the palace built by Louis XI at Montils on the outskirts of the town.

It was, however, at the old château that Louis celebrated his marriage with Margaret of Scotland, a daughter of James I and Joan Beaufort. The bride made her entry into Tours on horseback on 24th June, 1436. Alighting at the gate of the château, she was escorted by the Duke of Vendôme on the one hand and the Earl of Orkney on the other, followed by her Scottish suite, to the Grand'Salle. Here the kind-hearted Queen advanced to meet the poor little Princess, so strange and forlorn in her new surroundings, and taking her in her arms embraced and kissed her. Presently the Dauphin, who had waited in another room, entered with a group of nobles and cavaliers, and the two, who now met for the first time, *s'entrebaisèrent et accollèrent;* after which the Queen took them into her own room and amused them till supper-time.

The next day the marriage ceremony took place in the cathedral. The King, Charles VII, arrived while the bride was being dressed and went at once to her room. He had been



FAÇADE OF CHÂTEAU OF PLESSIS-LES-TOURS

extremely anxious for the match, which was to secure for him the aid of Scotland against the English, and is said to have been *moult joyeux et bien content de sa personne.* The Queen wore a gown of blue velvet on the occasion covered with gold ornaments and the young couple were royally attired, but the King did not change his travelling dress and attended the ceremony booted and spurred.

On account of their extreme youth the newly married pair were not given a separate establishment until the following year and for the present the Dauphine was left under the care of the Queen, Marie of Anjou, habitually kind and gentle to every one. She treated her little daughter-in-law with extreme tenderness, as, indeed, she had need to do, for Louis took an instant dislike to her and their relations were miserably unhappy. Fortunately she had inherited something of her father's tastes, and for a time she solaced herself with books and poetry, passing whole nights at the window composing rondeaux. Nevertheless, her husband's neglect preyed upon her, she became melancholy, and some ill-natured remarks of one of the courtiers coming to her ears added to her unhappiness. Then one August day after a long, hot walk she took a chill, pleurisy set in, and having apparently neither the wish nor the strength to go on living, she died a few days later (16 August, 1445).

"Life?" cried the unhappy young Princess to the pitying courtiers and ladies who stood about her bed. "Life? Fie! Let me hear no more of it!"

The King and Queen took their daughter-in-law's death greatly to heart. The Queen became ill from *la desplaisance et travail que elle eust à cause de la maladie et mort de madicte dame la Dauphine,* and Charles left Chalons, where she died, *soudainement comme dolent, courroucé et troublé;* but we

do not hear of any grief on the part of the Dauphin, whose neglect was the chief cause of her death. Margaret is described by her contemporaries as being beautiful, accomplished and gentle, too gentle, perhaps; Louis's coarse nature required coarse treatment. She was twenty-two when she died and had been married nine years.

In 1463 Louis bought for himself—King of France, Duke of Touraine, etc., etc., his heirs and successors, the domain of Montiz-les-Tours from Touchard de Maillé, seigneur of the neighboring château of Maillé. The only dwelling, a ruined and abandoned old keep, was pulled down, and in its place Louis built the famous château of Plessis-les-Tours, his favorite residence for the remainder of his life. It consisted of two large courts, the outer one surrounded by the stables and the lodgings of the Scottish Guard, and the inner one by the royal and state apartments, the offices, and the quarters of the household. At the upper end of this second court was a beautiful arcaded gallery, something like the one at Blois, for which it served as model. Three lines of fortified walls and as many deep moats surrounded the whole.

All that is left of these extensive buildings is a part of the east wing containing the chamber in which Louis died, the Guard room handsomely and tastefully restored by the present owner, Dr. Chaumié,[1] and the tower with its wide and imposing spiral stair. At what was the extreme southwest angle of the building are the remains of a former Guard room, where some holes in the wall and under the stairs are pointed out as being respectively the cells of Cardinal la Balue and Philippe de

[1] This room is being fitted up by Dr. Chaumié as a museum for objects connected with Louis XI and his period.

Commines, neither of whom, however, was confined at Plessis-les-Tours.[1] Yet another opening is described as an "oubliette."[2]

There is, indeed, little left to recall the formidable château described by Sir Walter in "Quentin Durward," with its turreted and battlemented walls, its triple moat fenced with iron palisades, its fortified towers and donjon-keep, and traps and pitfalls for the unwary. A pleasant garden overruns the spot whereon these things stood, vegetables flourish in the lines of the ancient moats, and even the ruins have been carted away to provide the neighboring hamlet with building materials. The one wing that remains is far more smiling than severe. It is built of light stone and mellow brick. Carved, ornamented, graceful, harmonious, Plessis-les-Tours ushered in the best period of that charming style of domestic architecture that was invented and developed in Touraine.

"From that time the formula was found. Details of decoration might change, but the character of the whole, of the details themselves, of the construction, the gables, windows, dormers, corbelled tourelles, and open stairs, remains the same for the next seventy or eighty years, and the type created by our architects in the second third of the XVth century was destined to endure for long and to keep alive French traditions in spite of the new styles introduced from beyond the mountains."[3]

The eastward-looking room in which the King died has large windows admitting plenty of light and air, and at one side there is a huge fire-place. As the end approached, Louis became ever more and more suspicious, and would have none

[1] See p. 73.
[2] See p. 81.
[3] "Tours et les châteaux de Touraine," Paul Vitry.

but persons of low station about him, people who had everything to lose by his death and nothing to gain. Even Anne de Beaujeu, his favorite child, was sent away and the young Dauphin was kept strictly at Amboise. A single exception was Philippe de Commines, the historian, who had gained the King's confidence; he remained with him to the last and has left a graphic account of the closing scenes.[1] On 25th August, 1483, the King's malady had taken so serious a turn that he was obliged to keep his bed, but he never ceased to issue commands and directions, maintaining a firm grip on all the affairs of the kingdom. He commanded Masses to be said for his soul in every parish, sent splendid presents to the most notable shrines, ordered processions—*mêlant à ses prières des instructions politiques, il parla, parla toujours jusqu' au moment où la mort vient lui fermer les lèvres.*

Commines says: "In all his life-time he had given commandement to all his servants, as well my selfe as others, that when we should see him in danger of death, we should onely moove him to confesse himselfe and dispose of his conscience, not sounding in his eares this dreadfull word Death, knowing that he should not be able patiently to heare that cruell sentence."[2]

Notwithstanding this order, when it was seen that the end was drawing near, some of his attendants conceived it to be their duty to inform the King. His tyrannical doctor, James Cottier, who, Commines says, received ten thousand crowns a

[1] Philippe de Commines was a native of Flanders. At first attached to the Duke of Burgundy, he left him to take service with Louis, on whose death, after a brief period of disgrace, he was received into favor at the court of Charles VIII. His *Mémoires* are the standard authority for the reign of Louis XI.

[2] "The History of Commines." Englished by Thomas Danett. Vol. II. p. 107, *et seq.* The Tudor Translations. Edited by W. E. Henley. XVII.



CHÂTEAU OF PLESSIS-LES-TOURS

month to keep his master alive, was selected for the task. He acquitted himself of it rudely.

"Sir," said he, "it is reason we do our duties, hope no more in this holie man,[1] nor in any other thing, for sure you are but dead: therefore think upon your conscience for your hower is come. . . ."

"Thus you see," says Commines, "how indiscreetly his death was signified to him. . . . Five or sixe dais before his death he had all men in suspition, especially all that were woorthie of credit and authoritie, yea, he grew jealous of his owne sonne, and caused him to be straightly guarded, neither did any man see him or speake with him but by his commandement."

Commines likewise recounts the extreme measures taken by Louis to protect his own person, how the Scottish archers kept watch by night and day, and the strict examination of all who came or went, with the constant changes made in the royal household. From all of which he deduces the extraordinary conclusion that the King's terror and misery "is to be accounted as a punishment God gave him in this world to ease him in the world to come. . . . After all these feares, sorrowes, and suspicions, God (according to his accustomed goodness) wrought a miracle upon him, healing him both in soule and bodie: for he tooke him out of this miserable world, being perfect in sense, understanding and memorie, having received all his sacraments without all griefe to man's judgement, and talking continually even within a *Pater Noster* while of his death so he gave order for his funerall, and named those that

[1] Saint Francois de Paul, whom Louis had sent for to Italy in the hope that the prayers of so great a Saint might ward off death. The ruins of the Minimes convent which he established at Plessis-les-Tours are still seen in the grounds.

should accompanie his bodie to the grave; saying ever, that he trusted to die on no day but Saturday, and that our Ladie, in whom he had ever put his confidence, and alwaies devoutly served, had purchased him this grace, and sure so it happened: for he ended his life upon Saturday the 30 of August in the yeere 1483, at eight of the clocke at night, in the said castell of Plessis, where he fell sicke the Monday before. His soule, I trust, is with God, and resteth in his blessed realme of paradise."

After the death of Louis XI Plessis-les-Tours was only inhabited by French sovereigns during their rare and brief visits to Tours. Charles VIII spent most of his short reign at Amboise, and Louis XII preferred his hereditary château at Blois. Henry III, however, when driven out of Paris by the League,[1] and with only Tours, Blois and Beaugency remaining to him, came to Plessis-les-Tours in March, 1589, and opened his parliament in the capitulary hall of the Abbey of St. Julien's in the town. On the 30th of the following month the King and Henry of Navarre had their famous interview in the garden of Plessis, at which they entered into an alliance against the League. The royal and the Huguenot troops joined forces and marched together to put down the rebellion at Paris, then in the hands of the Leaguers, taking a number of towns on the way. On 1 August the King was assassinated at St. Cloud by a fanatical monk named Jacques Clément. The King of Navarre, now free to fight his way to the throne, continued to hold parlia-

[1] The League was devised by the Guises against Henry III and to prevent the succession from passing to Henry of Navarre, the aspirant favored by the King. It was termed by its founders a "holy league, offensive, defensive and perpetual, for the sole teaching, defence and preservation of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman religion; and for the extirpation of heresy in France and the Netherlands." It excluded the "heretic Bourbons" from the throne, and named the foolish Cardinal de Bourbon as successor to Henry III.

ments in the abbey of St. Julien's till his abjuration of protestantism (25th July, 1593) opened the gates of Paris to him.

This historic hall is still standing in Tours on the north of the church, but in a dilapidated condition. The present church, dating from the XIIIth century, was badly injured during the Revolution, but was restored by public subscription in the last century. The altar, furnishings and glass are all modern, but many of the carved capitals of the pillars in the nave and the triforium are ancient and well preserved. At the west end of the nave, behind the organ loft, some traces of XIth and XIIth century paintings can be seen through the triforium arches. They are on the wall of a square tower rising outside the church proper, all that remains of an earlier building.

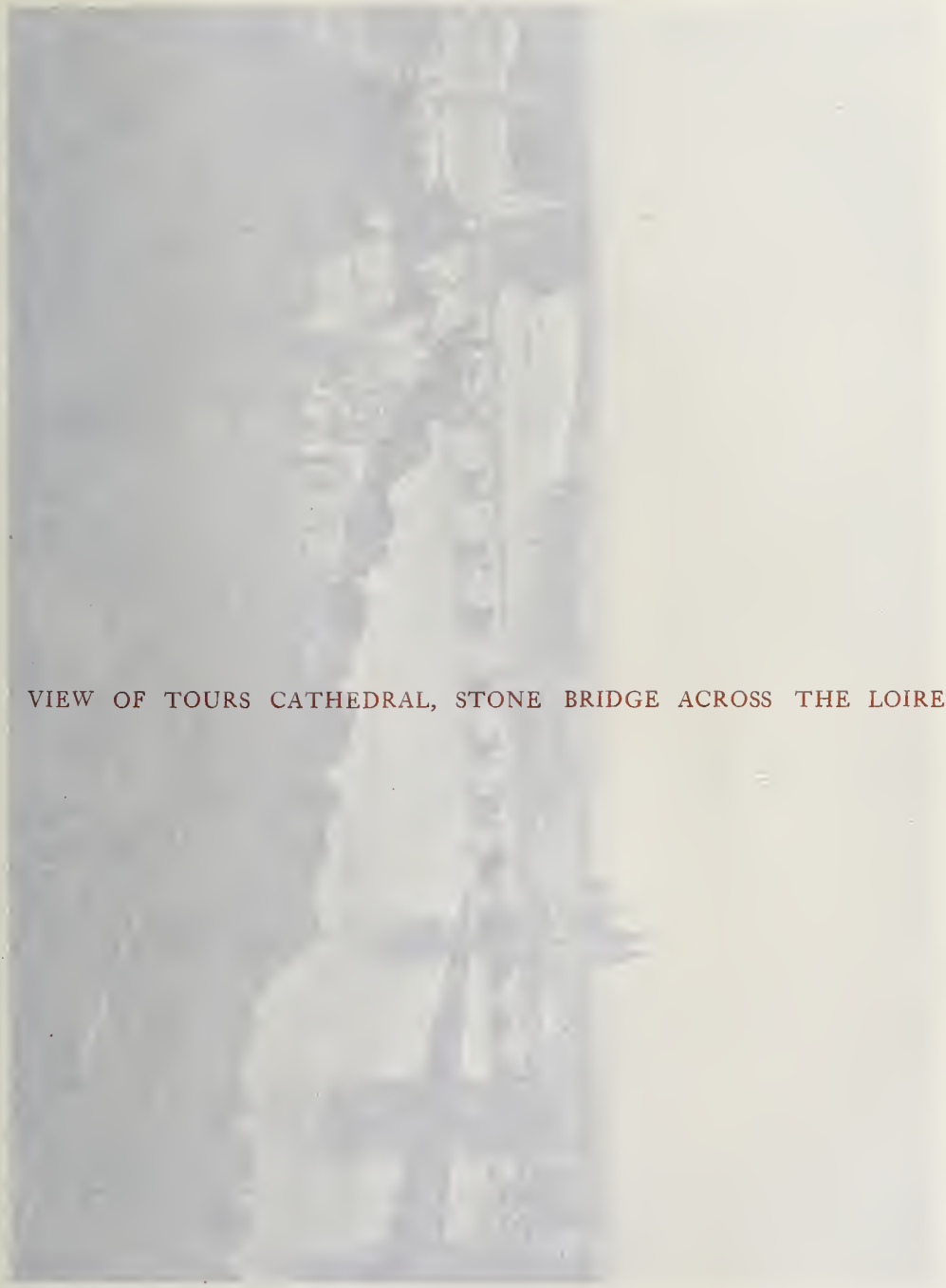
St. Julien's, lying between Châteauneuf and Tours, was a very old foundation, the nucleus of a settlement important enough to have a defensive wall of its own before it, together with all the other outlying communities, was gathered into the united town in the XVth century.

Another of these suburbs was St. Pierre des Corps, so named because it occupied the site of an old Roman cemetery on the east of the cathedral. Progress has not moved in this direction and it is a suburb still, quaint, picturesque, deserted, but reached by one of the most charming strolls in Tours. Beyond the shady quay, where no one seems ever to go, lie the wide, tranquil stretches of the Loire; the houses, the further you advance, grow ever older and older, the gables steeper, the roofs more mellow, more lichen-grown, more irregular. Now and again the side-streets fade into mere alley-ways, or end abruptly in court-yards surrounded by wooden galleries black with age and reached by carved outside stairs. In this region, too, the flowers seem to grow with peculiar exuberance; every window

is gay with them, while even the little pine-trees projected crookedly into the narrow street to proclaim the presence of a wine-shop, though long since dead and dry, have faded into a rich, deep brown.

Passing the quaint, sunken church of St. Pierre des Corps, with its rows of irregular gables, one comes upon a tiny cottage in the rue Avisseau, almost hidden by its garden wall and thick masses of ivy. A tablet tells that here Avisseau, the rediscoverer of the art of Bernard Palissy, was born in 1796. The story is as follows:

Avisseau was a simple workman, a potter employed in the manufacture and decoration of ordinary earthen-ware vessels; but all the time, as he fashioned his crocks and sauce-pans, his head was filled with visions of the beautiful pottery of the XVIth century, until at length it became the fixed dream of his life to discover the lost secrets of Palissy's art. Lured on by this ambition, he studied chemistry, pored over old books and manuscripts, kept many a weary vigil, denied himself many a necessity. At last, after twenty years of patient experimenting, he had succeeded in reproducing all of Palissy's colors but the red; that, the most important of all, still eluded him. Then, one day, as he hung over his crucible, it suddenly flashed into his mind that what was needed was gold. He gazed about him despairingly. Gold! Where was he to get enough even to prove himself right? His wife had been standing by silently watching him. "Here," said she quietly, "take this!" And drawing off her wedding-ring she handed it to him. This little act of self-denial so simply done set the crown upon her husband's labors; the experiment was successful and Avisseau's name will ever continue to be held in honor among the Tourangeaux so long as they continue to produce those beautiful and glowing faïences of which he revealed the secret. Some



VIEW OF TOURS CATHEDRAL, STONE BRIDGE ACROSS THE LOIRE

of Avisseau's own work can be seen in the Tours Museum; wonderfully life-like representations of fish, displayed upon oblong platters garnished with little carrots and turnips, and dishes of fruit in which the color and form, even the texture of the originals, are marvellously reproduced.

In 1682 a street called the rue Traversaine was opened, running north and south through the center of Tours. It soon became a popular thoroughfare and in 1765 plans were made to widen and extend it on the south, and to continue it on the north by throwing a bridge of stone across the Loire, starting at its southern extremity from a fine open square ornamented with gardens and statues and public buildings.

The bridge, with its twenty-seven stone arches, was finished in eleven years, and the work of widening the street, whose name, changed then to Royale, has since become Nationale, was helped forward by the action of the Municipality, who undertook to rebuild the façades of all the houses up to the second story. No. 39 of this modernized street is the birthplace of Balzac. It is marked by a bust and an inscription, and you may read the one and observe the other twenty times a day in passing and never feel convinced. No literary association is to be evoked from that ordinary-looking house which, with its ordinary fellows, seems entirely at home among the neighboring shops and hotels, the Crédit Lyonnais, and the "Grand Bazaar."

Facing the Pont de Pierre are twin buildings in the style of Louis XVI. One of these is the Museum, while the other is to receive the Town Library so soon as the completion of the elaborate new Hôtel de Ville at the other end of the rue Nationale shall drive it from its present unimposing but eminently pleasant quarters.

The Library of Tours was founded after the Revolution,

mainly on the libraries of suppressed religious houses, and consequently is especially rich in theological works. It possesses many rare editions and early examples of printing, among others the Mainz Bible, 1462, as well as upwards of twelve hundred valuable manuscripts. Among its treasures are the beautifully painted and embossed *Livres d'Heures* of Charles V and of Anne of Brittany, and the so-called "Charlemagne Bible," a copy of the Four Evangels inscribed in letters of gold of the most exquisite workmanship, the entire two hundred and seventy leaves being perfect. It was upon this volume that the Kings of France when inducted as Abbots of St. Martin's took the oath to preserve the rights, prerogatives and privileges of the Chapter.

And this brings us back once more to those early days when the first basilica dedicated to Saint Martin was still standing, when kings poured in their gifts at his shrine, and when Touraine was the rich prize over which the neighboring Counts of Blois and of Anjou fought and struggled away their lives; and it is to Loches, the fastness of this latter House, that we now turn.

LOCHES

CHAPTER III

LOCHES

THE château of Loches stands on the Indre, about thirty miles south of Tours, and the road, shortly after passing the village of Montbazon, follows the left bank of the stream for the rest of the way.

Montbazon takes its name from a towering donjon-keep which you can see from the train crowning a neighbouring height and surmounted in modern times by a colossal figure of the Virgin. Dating from the XIth century, this donjon, like all of its fellows in that rough age, was the scene of fighting and bloodshed and cruelty, and of long, wasting imprisonments. Now, the roof is gone and it is in ruins, but from the summit, placed at one angle of the frowning walls, the brooding figure of the Mother of Sorrows seems to breathe upon the sun-lit valley a peace that can never again be broken.

As the train draws up at Loches you perceive another town, on the right bank. This is Beaulieu, where Fulk Nerra, the most famous of the counts of Anjou, founded an Abbey in the XIth century, and where he himself is buried.

Immediately after leaving the station you have your first glimpse of the château, a mass of gray walls and pointed towers overhanging the town; and the first street on the left, a mere

passage between steeply climbing gabled houses, will lead you to its foot.

After passing under a low archway, the road makes a bend to the right and follows the line of the ancient moat directly under the towering walls of the citadel on the left, and the outer walls of enceinte on the right.

Here and there clumps of brilliant flowers grow hardily from some cranny in the walls where the dust has gathered, thick masses of ivy, high overhead, glisten in the sun, and a stream of limpid water rushes down over the clean, white stones of the gutter.

The effect of these huge walls of masonry and lofty towers, their enormous solidity and dizzy height, and then the utter peace, the silence and serenity of the summer day, the perfumed air, the shining foliage, the indescribable beauty and picturesqueness of every stone and angle upon which the eye rests, are well-nigh overpowering, and you steal silently up the deserted street like a person in a dream.

A notice painted beside the gateway at the top tells how M. César, whose garden lies beyond, will show *Messieurs et Mesdames les touristes* the wonderful subterranean galleries (by far the most interesting parts of the château) which he, M. César, had been so fortunate as to discover in 1892.

Yielding to the seductions of this sign, you push on and find the César family apparently still laboring under the excitement of the discovery. While Mlle. runs to fetch a lantern, Mme., standing in the middle of the path, tells you all about it. How a German lady came one day and asked to be shown the underground passages. "But there are none," they told her. Whereupon she insisted, she had read about them in an old book and they led out in this direction. She, Madame, had not believed



a word of it, but M. César had said: "Tiens, let us dig!" and so he had poked about and dug, and at last one day—Voila! he had found some steps and an archway, all choked up, of course, but there they were and the galleries just as the German lady had said.

M. César joins jovially in the recital, quite as though it all had happened yesterday and this were the first time of telling. Then he adds his two words of English—"Ver.r.ry intr..r..sting"—and Mlle. César comes with the lantern and acts as your guide.

They are indeed interesting, these vaulted passages, wonderfully constructed, with walls as fresh and dry as though but lately finished. They connect the citadel with the open country beyond, and were used to provision it in times of siege. When or why they were walled up as seen to-day is not known.

As you come out again into the sunshine and sweet air, you get your first sight of the donjon, the top of it, frowning darkly over the massive *tours-à-bec*[1] of the second wall of enceinte, and at once you begin to think of Fulk Nerra. For the personality of this man, the very embodiment of the dark spirit of the feudal age, was so strong that even now, after a period of nearly nine centuries has elapsed, his name is a household word in Touraine.

Loches (the word has the same derivation as the Scottish "loch") came into Fulk Nerra's family in 886 as the marriage portion of the bride of his great-grandfather, the first Count of Anjou. Fulk Nerra, violent and ruthless and possessed by a devouring ambition, made it the base of his operations in a campaign for the conquest of Touraine, which lasted inter-

[1] Rounded towers terminating in front in sharp angles, from which cannon balls will glance aside.

mittently throughout most of his life (973-1040) and which he bequeathed to his son to complete, and it is generally believed that Fulk built the two square towers which compose the donjon.

The lofty chalk plateau on which it stands commands the valley of the Indre, a strong position occupied from earliest times by a fortress of some sort. There are, or were, for in many places they have disappeared, three lines of enclosing walls, and a gateway on the south which has been walled up. Through it Marie de Médicis is said to have passed under the escort of the Duke of Épernon, the Governor of the castle, after her escape from Blois (February, 1619). One of the massive supports of the drawbridge is still standing, however, and disproves the local tradition that Épernon had the whole constructed in the course of a single night in order to facilitate the Queen's entry.

Passing by this gateway you reach the present entrance from which a narrow, sunny street leads up to the highest level of the plateau, where, at the further end of a thickly planted avenue of poplars, a gate admits to the innermost enclosure of the citadel and to the immediate and overpowering vicinity of the donjon.

You enter first a low, XIVth century addition built to provide a Guard room close to what was formerly the drawbridge and main gateway. Here are some clumsy manger-like constructions said to be the bedsteads of the Scottish guard.

In an inner room there is a cell formed by barring off the embrasure of a window where, we are told, Philippe de Commines composed a part of his *Mémoires*. It is not a commodious apartment, certainly, but in the matter of light and air, at least, it has the advantage over that black closet in the Tower of

London in which the Tower warders would have us believe that Raleigh wrote his "History of the World."

Even in its present ruined and roofless state, the great grey mass of the donjon rises to a height of a hundred and twenty feet above the ground. The floors are all gone and an outside stair leads to a doorway on the second floor, formerly, probably, reached only by ladder. The gaping roof lets in plenty of light and it is easy to make out the divisions of the different stories, the inside stairway, and, high overhead, a little oratory, the chapel of Saint Salle-bœuf, whose renown has disappeared even more completely than this shrine once dedicated to him. The altar is still there and some traces of red and yellow frescoes can be seen clinging to the ruined wall.

Formerly the two towers which compose the donjon had no communication below the main floor, but an opening knocked in the party-wall of the cellars now enables one to pass through to the larger tower. Here, too, the floors have all disappeared; while the massive walls, which shut out the sunlight and preserve an eternal moisture, have clothed themselves with festoons of ferns, of maiden-hair, of delicate trailing vines and velvety moss. The light, drifting down from the roofless height, is cool and green, the profound silence is broken only by the cries of the rooks circling and swooping in black flocks about the summit, where, across the deep blue square of sky, white clouds drive in quick succession.

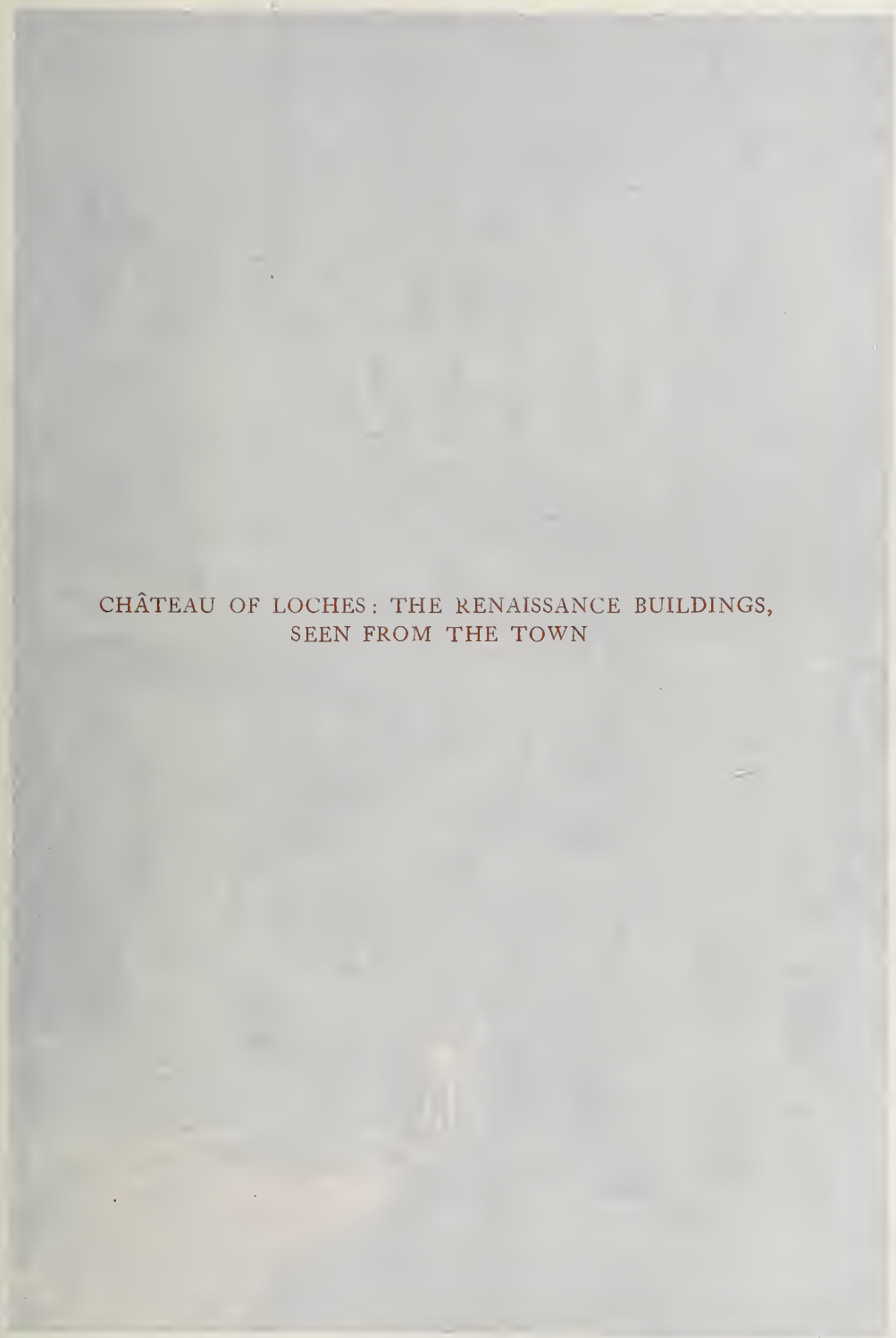
Seen in its present condition, the donjon of Loches is hardly a gay or smiling abode; what then must it have been in the day of its prime, with floors and windows intact and depending for light and air upon loopholes in those thick walls! Yet, it was no doubt in perfect keeping with the character of its builder.

Fulk Nerra was one of those persons about whose memory

stories and legends inevitably gather. He was one of the greatest soldiers and builders of his age, and he was equally famous for his ungovernable passions, for his cruelty and tyranny and for his boisterous repentances. His only son, Geoffrey Martel, rebelled against his father's stern rule and the struggle lasted four years; finally the son was conquered, and Fulk required him to walk for miles saddled like a beast of burden and at the end to sue for pardon prostrate upon the ground. "So," he remarked complacently, as he placed his foot upon his son's head, "I have downed you at last!" "Yes, you have," said the other, "but you are the only man living who could have done it."

In 1016, in the course of his struggle for Touraine, Fulk's forces and those of Odo, Count of Blois, met in the plain of Pontlevoi. There was a fearful battle, in which Fulk was worsted; just as he was about to retreat, however, reinforcements arrived, the cavalry of Count Odo was driven from the field and his foot left defenceless. Instantly falling upon these, Fulk massacred them to the number of three thousand, a huge figure for the battles of those days. This "murder of Christians," as it was termed, created a scandal throughout France, and even in other countries it was spoken of as a blot upon the reign of King Robert the Pious.

This, and many other acts of savagery, sent the Count of Anjou off some twenty years later on his last pilgrimage to the Holy Land. No one was ever more solicitous for the salvation of his own soul, and he had already twice made that long and weary journey. On one of these occasions he is described as having had himself dragged half naked through the streets of Jerusalem, calling upon Christ to "have mercy upon a traitor," while a servant walked on either hand scourging



CHÂTEAU OF LOCHES: THE RENAISSANCE BUILDINGS,
SEEN FROM THE TOWN



him with a whip; and he brought back, as a gift for the church at Loches, a piece of the true Cross which he tore off with his teeth!

His faith in the power of the saints and of holy relics was indeed almost incredible, yet his treatment of them was strangely irreverent. In 1025, after taking the town of Saumur from the Count of Blois,—it was still the struggle for Touraine,—he pillaged and set fire to it, the monastery of St. Florent being burned with the rest. Fulk implored the Saint "not to mind" and promised to raise a much finer building in his honor at Angers. The relics were accordingly placed in a boat to be transported down the Loire, but the rowers found that they could not advance an inch, try as they might. The Count of Anjou, all unused to opposition, became very angry; he called Saint Florent an ungodly boor to prefer a place like Saumur to a large and handsome town like Angers; yet he was afraid to persist, and the rejoicing monks were allowed to keep their relics.

Fulk's fame as a builder is almost as great as his fame as a soldier. A dozen walled towns and as many castles are attributed to him, as well as eleven churches and other religious foundations. The former were in pursuit of his undeviating policy of building up a great and enduring state for his house, the latter were given in expiation of his various crimes, sometimes paid in advance, as it were, for crimes still uncommitted. For fifty-three years, from the time that the death of his father, Grisegonelle, put him in power, until his own death at the age of sixty-seven, he fought and schemed and sinned and repented, a very scourge to his neighbors and by turns the terror and delight of the Church. At last, about the year 1038, he undertook his third pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and on his

way home he died. His body was brought back to Loches and buried in the Abbey Church at Beaulieu, which he had himself founded in 1007. After being lost sight of for hundreds of years, the tomb was rediscovered in 1870. In it were found a square, low-browed skull, two jaw-bones with their full complement of teeth, and a handful of bones; and that is all we have from which to construct a portrait of this redoubtable man, one of the great figures of his age and the true founder of the glory of the House of Anjou.

Geoffrey Martel, his son, was born at Loches and nursed there by the blacksmith's wife, from which circumstance he got his name of the Hammer. His father left him master of Anjou, Loudun, Saintonge, and a part of Berry, but Touraine, the darling object of all the old count's schemes, was only won when Geoffrey had conquered Tours and Le Mans. Geoffrey left no children, but his sister Ermengarde, who had married the Vicomte d'Orléans or de Gatinais, had two sons who succeeded. These two quarrelled over their inheritance until the younger, Fulk le Rechin, or the Surly, completely defeated his brother, whom he imprisoned in the donjon of Chinon for nearly thirty years.[1] Meanwhile the Rechin lived riotously, misgoverned the country, and married and divorced four wives in succession. The fifth, Bertrade de Montfort, a beautiful and dissolute woman of whom he is said to have been dotingly fond, so fascinated the King, Philip I, that he repudiated his own wife in order to marry her and was excommunicated in consequence. This lady, having failed in an attempt to obtain the crown of France for her own son by making away with Philip's son by his first wife, after the King's death once more turned her attention to the affairs of Anjou. She went back

[1] See page 113

to her former husband, the Rechin, who received her gladly, poisoned his son Geoffrey, a youth of remarkable promise, and had the satisfaction of obtaining the succession for a son of her own, Fulk V, le Jeune, who became Count of Anjou on his father's death a few years later. It was the marriage of this Fulk's son, Geoffrey, surnamed Plantagenet, from his habit of wearing a sprig of broom *(planta genesta)* in his cap, to the ex-Empress Matilda, daughter of Henry I of England, that eventually brought the throne of England and the Duchy of Normandy to the House of Anjou, which in the meanwhile by another marriage had added Aquitaine to its already vast possessions. These events, however, are more nearly connected with the history of Chinon than with that of Loches, which, after Geoffrey Martel's time, saw but little of its Counts.

In 1193 the French King, Philip Augustus, taking advantage of Richard Cœur-de-Lion's imprisonment in Germany by the Emperor, Henry VI, possessed himself of Loches; but Richard escaped, and in June of the following year he is besieging his own castle of Loches with such fury that that well-nigh impregnable stronghold is captured in a violent assault of three hours. On his death five years later, Cœur-de-Lion bequeathed Loches as a part of the portion of his Queen, Berangaria, but this did not prevent his brother, John Lackland, from seizing it.

In March, 1202, Philip Augustus summoned King John to resign to his nephew, Prince Arthur of Brittany, the Provinces of Anjou, Poitou and Normandy, reminding him at the same time that he was liege-man to the King of France. John refused, and when the case was heard he failed to appear, whereupon the French Courts declared all the lands which either he or his predecessors had held in fief from the King of France to be forfeit, "for having scorned to render to his sovereign

most of the services which, as a vassal, he owed him, and for having constantly disobeyed his orders."

In the following year rumors of the murder of young Arthur of Brittany began to circulate. The facts have never been fully known, but it was said that the King of England had done his nephew to death with his own hand at Rouen, and had then thrown the body into the Seine with a stone tied around the neck, notwithstanding which precaution it had been found later by a fisherman and had been buried at Bec. That was why King John had gone back to England.

Nothing could have furthered Philip Augustus's schemes better than this crime. It gave him another pretext for keeping Anjou, Maine, most of Touraine and a part of Berry, which he already held in the name of Arthur of Brittany, and for taking the rest. In his triumphant campaign of 1204-5 almost the only places to offer a serious resistance were Chinon and Loches. These held out for nearly a year and the latter, under the command of Gérard d'Athés, *fut par le Roy assiegée, lequel y ayant fait une grande et cruelle batterie, l'emporta, y prenant quelques six vingts soldats et le susdict Gérard.* When the place fell at last, it was found to be almost in ruins, only the collegiate church was unhurt. Philip Augustus repaired the fortifications and put the castle into a state of defence, and since that day Loches has never ceased to belong either directly or in fief to the Crown or the State.

By the beginning of the XVth century Fulk Nerra's donjon, so formidable in its time, was completely out of date, and had to be remodelled. Under Charles VI, Charles VII and Louis XI the Martelet tower and the Tour Ronde were built, a Guard house was added to the donjon, and the *tours-à-bec* were lowered and fitted for cannon. By the time all this was completed,



TOURS-À-BEC WITH TOP OF FULK NERRA'S DONJON AT LOCHES

however, the day of feudal architecture was nearly over. Under Charles VII the town was surrounded by walls of its own and for the future was expected to defend itself from attack; the gloomy buildings of the citadel became a prison and barracks, and the King began to build a Renaissance palace at the other end of the plateau.

Of the older buildings the Tour Ronde, or Tour Louis XI, as it is now usually called, is the chief. This is a lofty tower rounded on the outer side and surmounted by a square roof, with a little sharply peaked cupola. There are three floors connected by a winding stair and a large underground apartment probably used as a store-room. On the first floor is the torture-chamber, spacious and not uncheerful. A heavy horizontal iron bar embedded at either end in a solid stone pillar, and furnished with iron rings, is shown as the device for keeping the prisoner fast while the torture was being administered; and the custodian, pointing to a great stone fire-place, tells that "this is where they heated the oil." A dozen or so pallet-beds with which the room is now furnished are for tramps—"vagabonds," who are kept here during the winter months. It was also, probably, in this room that the famous cage in which Louis XI shut up Cardinal la Balue stood.[1] These cages were an invention of Guillaume de Haraucourt, Bishop of Verdun, who, according to Philippe de Commines, was the first to test their merits. The Bishop and his friend, Jean la Balue, who, beginning his career as an obscure country curé, had been advanced through the King's recommendation to be a Councillor of State

[1] M. Edmond Gautier, who made the buildings of the citadel the object of years of study, says that one of the two cages at Loches was kept in the room above the old gate-way and the other in the main room of the Tour Ronde. Neither of them, he thinks, was ever suspended, and ranks as pure invention the statement that La Balue's cage hung from some staples seen in the underground apartment. See "Histoire du Donjon de Loches," Edmond Gautier.

and then a Cardinal, had been discovered in treasonable correspondence with the Duke of Burgundy. There was no trial, but there was plenty of proof. The two churchmen were seized and imprisoned, and La Balue was confined for eleven years and the Bishop for fourteen. The cage in which the former spent a part of his term was of the size of a small cell, it was made of stout wooden bars heavily clamped with iron, and was designed primarily to make all attempt at escape impossible.

The idea appealed irresistibly to Louis, he would have liked to provide cages for all his prisoners, and, when writing to the Bastard of Bourbon, Admiral of France, with regard to the custody of the Seneschal of Guyenne, he enclosed a sketch, with the suggestion that it might be well to have one made like it. The Admiral was so affronted that he returned word that if that were the King's idea of how a prisoner should be kept he might take charge of this one himself. La Balue spent three years at Loches and was then removed to Montbazon.

Another tenant of one of the cages at Loches—we have it on his own authority—was the historian and favorite of Louis XI, Philip de Commines. For some years after King Louis's death Commines continued in the good graces of the Regent, Anne de Beaujeu. In 1486, however, he joined the Duke of Orléans in a plot to overthrow the Beaujeu government, and was seized and shut up in La Balue's cage at Loches.

"Moreover, the King had caused divers cruel prisons to be made, as, for example, cages being eight foote square, and one foote more than a man's height, some of iron, and some of wood, plated with iron both within and without with horrible iron works. He that first devised them was the Bishop of Verdun, who incontinent was himselfe put into the first that was made,

where he remained fowerteen yeeres. Many have cursed him for his devise, and among others my selfe, for I lay in one of them under the King that now reigneth the space of eight moneths."[1]

In 1790, at a meeting of the "Patriotic and Literary Society" of Loches, one of the members moved for the destruction of this "relic of despotism and slavery." The resolution was adopted with enthusiasm and emotion. The wood, except for a few pieces reserved for the bonfire of the succeeding 14th July, was given to the poor and the proceeds from the sale of the iron as well. The original and more sentimental idea had been that these should form a fund for the widows and children of the "conquerors of the Bastille."

Under Louis XIV, and again under the first Napoleon, many prisoners of war were confined in the Tour Ronde. The walls of the stairway and of the rooms on the upper floors are covered with inscriptions and rude frescoes and figures cut in the stone, records of these and of still earlier captives. The stair leads out on the roof which, surrounded by a low stone balustrade, forms a sort of terrace and commands a wide and lovely view.

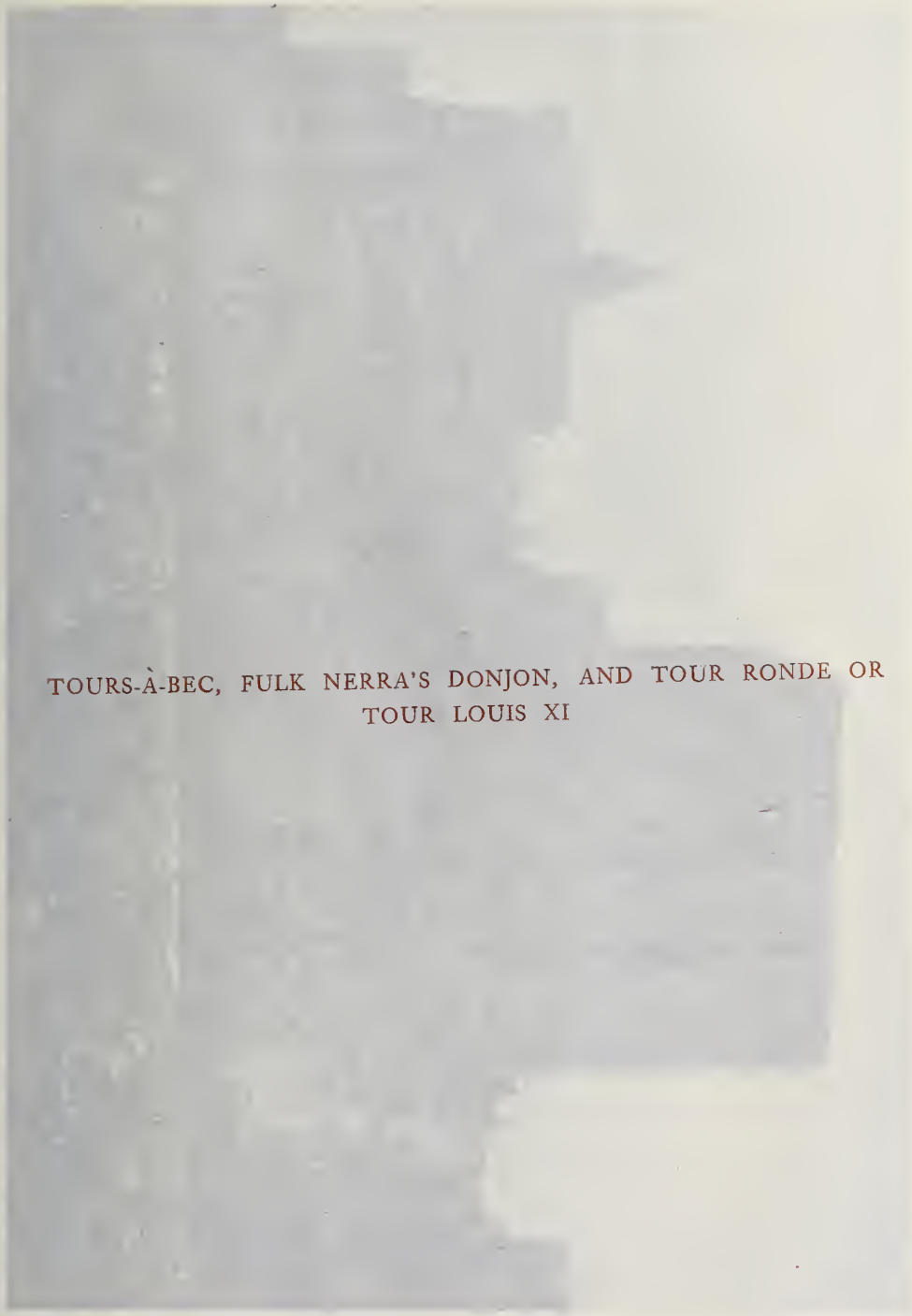
Directly in front on the east rises the square, grey mass of Fulk Nerra's donjon; south of it are, first, the inner line of enceinte and then the second line with its three great *tours-à-bec.* Within these last is the Martelet, and beyond them are the rounded heights of Bel Ebat and Vignemont. On the west are the shining slate roofs and white walls of the modern town, the sharp summits of the ancient gate *de Picois,* the Tour St. Antoine, formerly the town belfry, and the Porte des Cordeliers. Beyond the Porte de Picois there is a shimmering glimpse of the Indre, winding its leisurely way amidst harvest fields and

[1] Danett's Commines. The Tudor Translations, XVIII.

fruitful orchards. Between the town and the citadel a thick line of foliage marks the line of the moat. On the extreme northeast are the steep slate roof and pointed tourelles of the château, and nearer, in a line with it, a row of singular pointed domes marks the ancient collegiate church of Notre Dame, now called St. Ours. Further west and on the other side of the river, completely hidden at this point by trees, a tall, pointed tower belongs to the ancient abbey of Beaulieu, the burial-place of Fulk Nerra.

It is below the Martelet that the dungeons are found which, associated as they have been in the popular fancy with Louis XIth's sardonic cruelties, have given Loches such an evil name. Guided by a custodian with a lighted lantern, the visitor descends thirty-eight steps of winding stair and emerges in a good-sized room lighted from a narrow slit in the nine-feet-thick wall. This slit, however, opens only on the stair and receives its light from a window in the outer wall. Built on the extreme edge of the plateau, the substructures of the Martelet are cut out of the rock itself. Thus, while from the inner side the dungeons seem to lie far below ground, their outer walls are simply a continuation of the sheer rock, and their windows facing west are actually far above the level of the moat.

This first room is the one in which Ludovico Sforza, Duke of Milan, called the Moor, was confined for many years by Louis XII. The King himself had a strong claim upon the Duchy of Milan through the marriage contract of his grandmother, Valentine Visconti, daughter of Duke Galeas I; and he made a point of always referring to Ludovico Sforza as "Monsieur Ludovico." In 1499 the Venetians and French formed an alliance against the Milanese, and in April of the



TOURS-À-BEC, FULK NERRA'S DONJON, AND TOUR RONDE OR TOUR LOUIS XI

following year the Moor, betrayed by his Swiss mercenaries, was taken prisoner at Novaro before a blow had been struck. Louis was wild with delight when he heard the news; the chief object of the campaign had been accomplished with the capture of the Duke and his only fear now was lest the prisoner might escape. He despatched message after message to his lieutenant, La Tremoïlle, urging him to send his prize to France without delay, "for," said he, "I shall not have a moment's peace till the said Ludovico is safely landed on this side of the mountains." A cage was sent to the frontier to receive him, and in it he was conveyed to Loches.

The Moor, although he is said to have cleared his way to power by poisoning his nephew and sending the latter's son to the monastery of Marmoutier, where he died, was nevertheless an excellent ruler and a liberal patron of the fine arts. On the walls of his dreary prison can still be seen a quite elaborate series of frescoes painted by him during the long years of his confinement, and there is also a primitive little sun-dial which he fashioned on the only spot of wall on which the sun ever strikes. By devices such as these he may have saved his reason, but his health at length broke down and he was removed to a lighter and more airy apartment, probably in the Tour Ronde. Before long, however, he died, having passed eight years in captivity, and was buried in the collegiate church "with all the honors due to a Prince." Subsequently his body was taken back to Italy.

Nineteen steps below Sforza's prison is another, much the same both in size and appearance. Here the slit of window commands only a tiny section of sky and a glimpse of waving branches. The edge of the deep sill, widening out on the inside, is five feet or more from the floor and below it and on the sill

itself are hollow places worn in the stone by the hands and feet of human creatures who, through weary years of captivity, have climbed and clutched and clung to snatch the last faint glow in the western sky before the interminable night should settle down upon them once more.

All around this room at intervals appear the words *Jhesus Maria* painfully cut in the stone, and, directly opposite the window, is a pathetic little attempt at an altar with a cross carved above it and a credence-table, scooped out of the wall.

"The cell of the Bishops" is the name by which this room is known, for it is here that the Bishops of Puy and Autun were confined by Francis I in 1523. The King, on the eve of departure to resume the war in Italy, was informed by the Grand Seneschal of Normandy, the husband of Diane of Poitiers, of a gigantic conspiracy headed by the Constable de Bourbon to betray France into the hands of the Emperor Charles V. The Constable, warned in time, managed to escape, but most of his accomplices were taken, among them the two Bishops and Jean of Poitiers, Sieur de Saint-Vallier, Diane's father. When the Grand Seneschal discovered that his father-in-law was among the prisoners he was horrified, and tried hard to obtain his release. Saint-Vallier on his side wrote the most appealing letters, imploring the Seneschal to come to Loches to consult as to what had best be done, or, if he could not come himself, to send his wife. He declares "on the damnation of his soul" that he has been arrested for no reason whatever, and shut up like a false traitor. Then he addresses himself to his daughter: "I implore you to have pity on your poor father, and come to see me. My only hope lies in your husband and in you," and so on. Meantime a commission had been appointed to try the case; it met first at Loches, but in December the prisoners were

taken to Paris, where Saint-Vallier was condemned to death and all his property confiscated. All the while his son-in-law never ceased his efforts, and, at last, when the prisoner had actually been led to the scaffold, the King commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life "in consideration of the service rendered by the Seneschal of Normandy in exposing the plot."

A story, without any foundation in fact, that the fair Diana bought her father's reprieve as the price of her honor, has been fixed in the public mind by Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s' Amuse,* in which Saint-Vallier is made to address the King in a speech full of dignity and scathing contempt. It concludes:

> Sire, je ne viens pas vous demander ma fille.
> Quand on n'a plus d'honneur, on n'a plus de famille;
> Qu'elle vous aime ou non d'un amour insensé,
> Je n'ai rien a reprendre ou la honte a passé:
> Gardez-la!

A special clause in the treaty of Madrid forced by Charles V upon Francis I in 1526 provided that all those concerned in Bourbon's plot should be pardoned. So, after three years' imprisonment, the Sieur of Poitiers was liberated, his health completely shattered, however, and his hair whitened, it is said, in a single night, that preceding the day set for his execution.

Beyond the prison of the Bishops and Saint-Vallier is an inner one connected with it by a short passage and without window of any kind. A square hole at one side is pointed out as an *oubliette,* but it opens into the cellar below and was certainly never used for the sinister purpose implied in the name. Viollet-le-Duc, says, indeed, that he knew of but three *oubliettes* in all France to which the name could have been applied with any degree of plausibility: those at Chinon, the Bastille and at Pierrefonds, while in his own opinion of these three that at

Pierrefonds alone was a veritable *oubliette*. He believes, moreover, that the vulgar conception of the character of the prisons of ancient France is quite erroneous:

"Both the number and the horror of these places of confinement during the Middle Ages have been greatly exaggerated. There still exist at the château of Loches well authenticated prisons which are simply grated rooms, sanitary and quite sufficiently lighted." [1]

This passage may refer to the prisoners in the Tour Louis XI, but even those in the Martelet are by no means so terrible as one is led to expect. They are quite as large and dry and nearly as light and airy as were the state apartments in Fulk Nerra's donjon close by where Louis XI passed his own boyhood. The donjon was considered a suitable residence for the Dauphin of France, it being particularly noted that, although Charles VII only saw his son occasionally, he provided liberally for his establishment. The main hardship for the prisoners undoubtedly lay in the fact of confinement; it was an age of great bodily activity, even delicate women of the highest birth made long journeys on horseback, and men of every class were accustomed to live in the saddle and, when occasion required, to sleep out of doors. They would feel suffocated, shut in, between those narrow walls, and would beat against their prison bars like caged animals. Almost everyone to-day visits these so-called underground prisons, whose windows face the west, in the morning; in the afternoon no lantern is needed. Ludovico Sforza's frescoes, though high up against the ceiling, can be examined without difficulty, and even the Bishops' cell below is surprisingly light.

A creepy story, utterly scouted by some authors and gravely

[1] See "Dictionaire Raisonne de l'Architecture," Viollet-le-Duc.



THE CELL OF LUDOVICO SFORZA

repeated by others, is told of a discovery made by a certain Pontbriand, Governor of Loches under Louis XII, "a very curious man who wanted to pry into every secret dungeon and passage-way in the castle." While investigating one day the Governor found a heavy iron door securely fastened; he forced it, passed through a narrow passage hewn out of the solid rock, forced another door and found himself in a small, dim room, at the opposite extremity of which he made out the figure of a man of gigantic stature, seated on a stone and holding his head between his hands; at his feet was a small wooden coffer. The Governor made a step forward, but as the outer air came in contact with the body it crumbled into dust, and the secret of its identity perished.

The small room beyond Saint-Vallier's prison is pointed out as having been the scene of this remarkable incident.

LOCHES

(Continued)



CHAPTER IV

LOCHES *(Continued)*

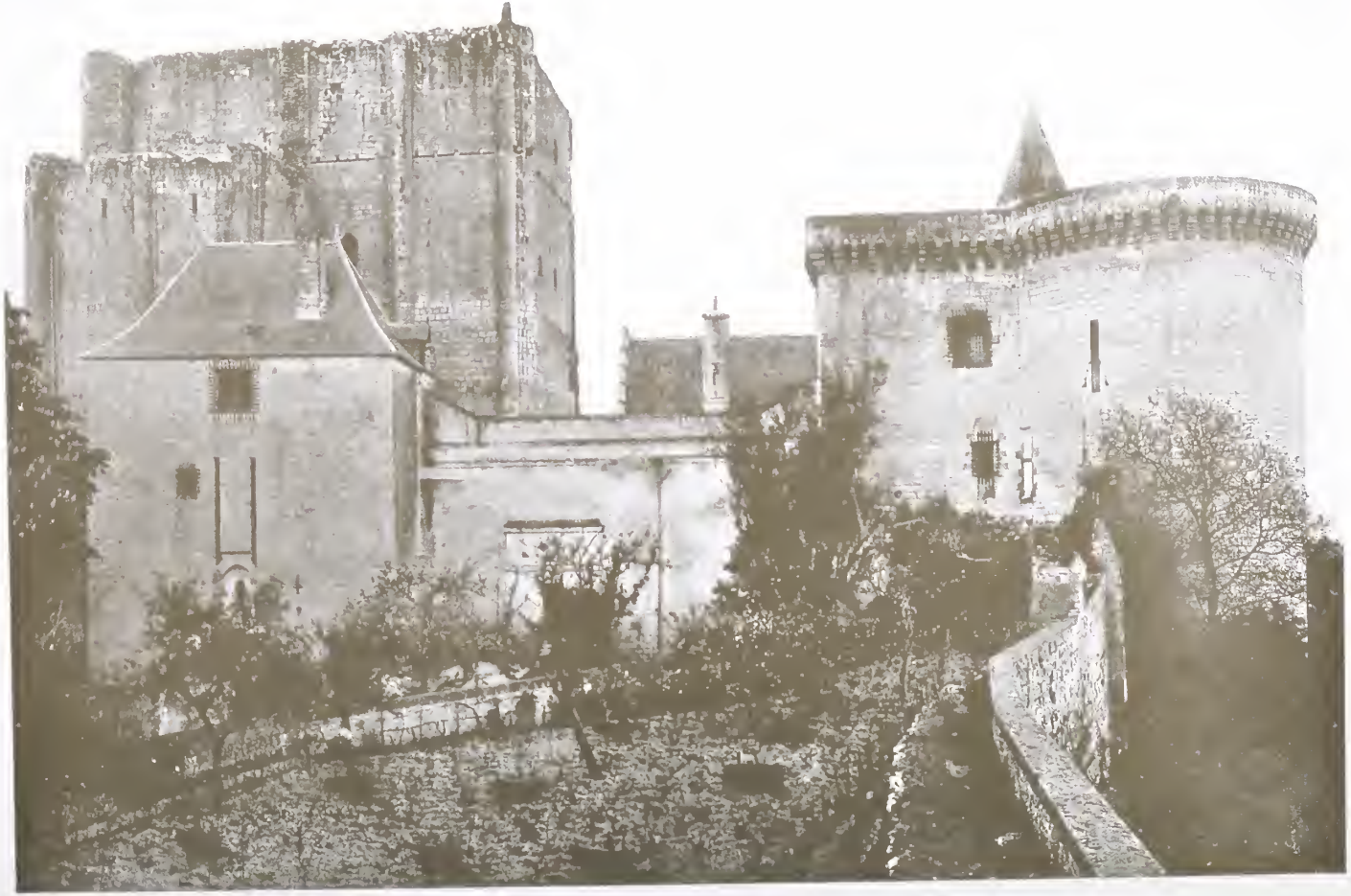
IN the opposite direction from the group of buildings just described, and not far from the royal château, stands the collegiate church of St. Ours. A XIIth century chronicler, l'Anonyme de Marmoutier, says that the people of Loches were converted to Christianity by Saint Martin. He is probably wrong, but another Bishop of Tours, Saint Eustache, certainly built a church there some time about the middle of the Vth century, which he dedicated to Saint Mary Magdalene.

By the latter part of the Xth century, when Loches was a part of the domain of the Counts of Anjou, this church had fallen into ruin. Geoffrey Grisegonelle, the father of Fulk Nerra, oppressed by the weight of his sins, set out in the year 962 upon a pilgrimage to Rome. Pope John received him with much condescension, heard his confession in St. Peter's, and directed him, in addition to various acts of penance, to build a church in honor of the Virgin Mary. The Pope pronounced a solemn anathema upon anyone who should interfere with this pious work, and Grisegonelle with his suite returned to France. Three years later the church of Notre Dame du Château de Loches was dedicated on the site of the former chapel of Saint Mary Magdalene.

Shortly after this the Count of Anjou was able to present to his new foundation a priceless relic, one-half of a girdle of the Virgin Mary. Nothing is known of the history of this relic before the middle of the IXth century, when it was sent from Constantinople to King Charles the Bald of France. From that day to this, however, a period of more than a thousand years, the record appears to be unbroken. At first the girdle was preserved in the Chapel royal of the Kings of France, until Queen Emma, wife of Lothair, presented it, about the year 978, to the Count of Anjou, in reward for his eminent services to the crown. Deposited in the collegiate church of Loches, it attracted swarms of pilgrims from all over the country. The shrine was in the form of a model in gold of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, within which the girdle reposed in a sort of bowl hollowed out of a piece of rare agate studded with precious stones. It was kept in a closet hewn out of the solid rock and closed with double iron doors furnished with five locks.

Twice a year, on 3d May, the "Invention of the Holy Cross," and on the Feast of the Assumption, 15th August, the girdle was publicly exposed, while the royal family enjoyed the right to pay their devotions to it whenever they might be at Loches.

During the Revolution the Church of Notre Dame suffered terribly. Two kneeling portrait statues of Count Grisegonelle and his son, Fulk Nerra, which the latter had caused to be placed there, were broken in pieces and thrown down a neighboring well; all the carvings were hacked and battered, and the rich treasures of the church, among them a golden reliquary, were stolen. Fortunately the curé, le Sieur Pierre Réné Leduc, though branded later as a "schismatic," succeeded in saving the girdle. He kept it by him first in his house at Loches,



then at Tours and finally at Nantes, until the practice of religion having once more become lawful in France, it could safely be sent back to Loches. The curé in charge at Notre Dame received one day "by the swift and sure agency of the post" a package which proved to contain the precious object enveloped in the same wrappings of costly material in which it had always been kept. An "attestation" of its authenticity was at once made out and signed by a number of persons—canons, chaplains and others who had been familiar with the relic before the Revolution.

The girdle is made of a brownish material the exact texture of which has never been ascertained. It measures something over a yard in length by about an inch in width. On all great festivals of the Church the relic is exposed on the altar of the Virgin Mary. On the Feast of the Assumption, it is carried in procession after Vespers through the streets of the town accompanied by bands of young girls dressed in white, carrying baskets of flowers and chanting hymns in praise of the Blessed Virgin. It is also the custom for girls on the occasion of their first Communion and again on their marriage to wear belts which have been brought into contact with the girdle and blessed by the parish priest. Similar belts are worn by women about to be confined and greatly prized by them. Formerly the canons sent such belts to the Queen and the royal Princesses on the eve of their confinement. The custom was revived for the Empress Eugénie before the birth of the Prince Imperial. At present the girdle is kept by the curé at his own house and can usually be seen by applying to him.

Among the special privileges enjoyed by the church of Loches was the very highly prized one of being under the direct jurisdiction of Rome, in sign of which an annual tax of five sous

was paid and spent in oil to be burned before the tomb of Saint Peter. Anyone attempting to encroach upon this privilege was liable to excommunication and the Chapter was particularly jealous of all interference on the part of the archiepiscopal see of Tours. In 1448 the Archbishop, Jean Bernard, announced his intention of coming to Loches to perform his devotions in the Church of Our Lady, and to stay in the house of one of the canons. Instantly the Chapter forbade his doing either, and threatened to excommunicate the canon should he receive him. Eight years later, the Chapter having been reprimanded by an ecclesiastical court for exceeding their rights in this matter, consented grudgingly and under protest, to allow the Archbishop of Tours to enter their church once a year, but without the episcopal ring, crosier, or rochet, nor might he lodge within the precincts. In other words, the Archbishop was to come simply as a worshipper and without any symbol of authority. This not being in the least what the prelate desired, he waited a year, then suddenly presented himself at the church door with his crosier borne before him. The watchful canons were, however, ready. They lowered the crosier and even removed the carpet from the *prie-dieu* where the Archbishop knelt before he was permitted to enter.

As we see it to-day the former church of Notre Dame de Loches dates almost entirely from about the middle of the XIIth century, when it was rebuilt by its prior, Thomas Pactius. "Just at the precise moment," says Viollet-le-Duc, "that separates buildings with domes from those without. . . . A strange, unique edifice, in which the influences of eastern art blend and mingle with those methods of construction adopted in the north in the beginning of the XIIth century. . . . If this remarkable building were in Italy, or Germany, or England, it

would be talked about and prized and studied as a unique and valuable example of Roman art, and steps would be taken to preserve it from all fear of injury . . . being in France, not more than a few kilometres from the banks of the Loire, it has been allowed to suffer restoration at the hands of local architects who seem to have had no suspicion of its value in the history of art."

The striking features of the church are the rude, grotesque, yet animated, carvings of the west portal, and the unusual treatment of the roof, where the four bays of the nave are surmounted, those at the two ends by steeples and the middle ones by lofty, hollow pyramids supported on corbel-tables.

A subterranean chapel, built possibly by Louis XI, was discovered beneath the church in 1839. The Revolutionists for some reason had filled it in with earth at the same time that they converted the church into a Temple of Reason, and totally destroyed the parish church of St. Ours which stood at the end of the present rue du Petit Fort. In 1803, when Notre Dame de Loches was restored to its original use, it became the parish church and was placed under the patronage of Saint Ours, the two foundations being thus merged in one.

At the period when the collegiate church was approaching the zenith of its wealth and influence, a splendid royal château was rising close beside it on the northwestern extremity of the plateau.

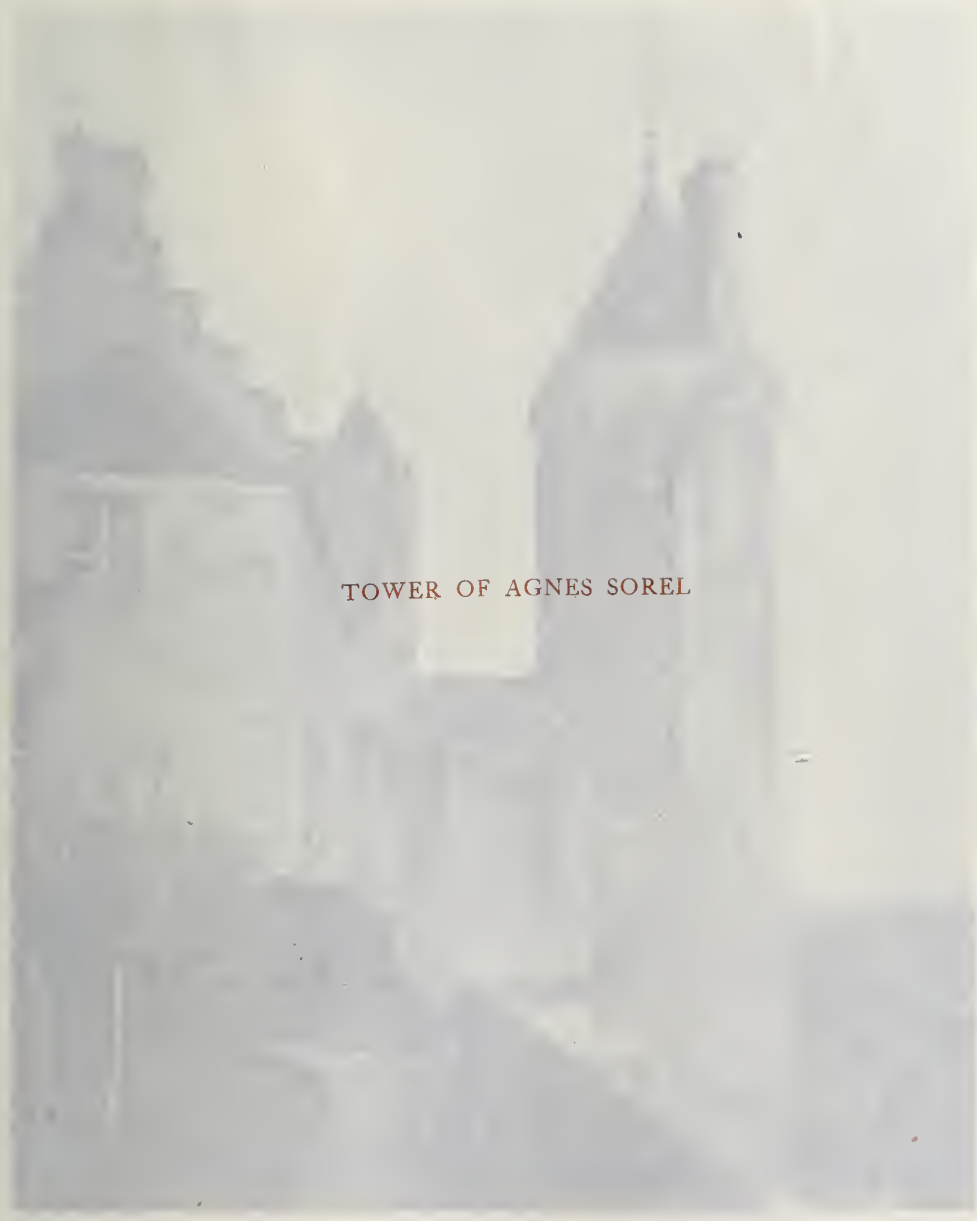
Already, by the early part of the XVth century, the wealthy classes were beginning to weary of their fortress-like dwellings. Princes and nobles and even the rich bourgeois were demanding light and air and ornament and comfort. In Paris Raymond du Temple had transformed the Louvre into a habitable dwelling for Charles V, and this King had, moreover, provided himself

with a hôtel, a dwelling pure and simple, at the other end of Paris, the many-towered Hôtel des Tournelles.

At Loches, however, the change did not come till Charles VIIIth's time. It was he who began the charming château which to-day so picturesquely crowns the rock on the side overlooking the old town. Charles's share in it, which was not extensive, consists of the part called the Tour Agnes Sorel, in which the favorite's tomb now stands and where local tradition would have us believe her royal lover shut her up when he went hunting in the neighboring forest. An anecdote invented by a XVIth century writer, Bernard du Haillon, and repeated by Brantôme, and some lines said to have been written by Francis I beneath a portrait of Agnes Sorel in an album belonging to Madame du Boissy, are responsible for the patriotic halo in which the memory of the Belle des Belles has been enveloped. The story told by Du Haillon is that the favorite came one day to the King, Charles VII, and told him that an astrologer had predicted in her childhood that she was to be beloved by the most powerful prince in Christendom. She therefore now wished to leave him and to go to the King of England, as it was evidently he and not Charles who was meant, since the latter allowed himself to be robbed of his kingdom without raising a hand in its defence. "Whereupon," says the account, "the King was so pricked in the heart that he began to weep, and from that moment forward he took the bit in his teeth and instead of passing all his time in hunting or in his gardens, he exerted himself to such good purpose that with the help of his faithful followers, he drove the English out of the country."

The quatrain attributed to Francis I runs:

Plus de louange son amour s'y mérite
Etant cause de France recouvrer



TOWER OF AGNES SOREL



Que n'est tout ce qu'en cloistre peult ouvrer
Close nonnayn ou au désert Ermyte.

Agnes, however, was still a child when Henry V of England died, and did not visit the court until 1443, when she came in the train of Isabelle of Lorraine, sister-in-law of the Queen, Marie of Anjou. She and Charles thus met for the first time, seven years after the Treaty of Arras[1] had "marked the first decisive step on the road to deliverance"; and the King's character had undergone that "marvellous" transformation which has been commonly attributed to his mistress. After the disgrace of La Tremoïlle in 1433[2] the change had already become apparent. La Tremoïlle was replaced by a group of resolute men—the Constable Richemont, Brézé, Jacques Cœur and others. The King threw off his lethargy and, other circumstances being favorable, the work of France's salvation begun a few years before by Jeanne d'Arc was carried on to a successful issue.

Agnes Sorel did, it is true, urge the King to undertake the expedition to Normandy in 1449-1450, which resulted in the reconquest of that country in less than a year, but in other respects her influence was malign. She found Charles weak and left him vicious, and she was the first to occupy the equivocal position at Court of *favourite en titre*.[3] It was thought at that time a scandalous thing that a woman in her position should live publicly at Court and maintain a state greater than that of the Queen herself. Marie of Anjou was indeed completely eclipsed by the marvellous beauty and exuberant youth of the favorite, who, moreover, was of so sunny and amiable a nature that everyone liked her. Yet there was dissatisfaction

[1] The Treaty of Arras sealed the fatal feud between the Crown and the powerful House of Burgundy and ended the alliance of the latter with the English.

[2] See page 141.

[3] Par une nouveauté inouie dans les annales monarchiques, on vit en elle pour la première fois, une favourite en titre." Vallet de Viriville, t. III. p. 29.

caused as much by her luxury and extravagance as by the scandal. "In all Christendom there was not a single princess who dressed so magnificently or lived in such splendour as she. A hundred thousand murmurs arose not against her only, but against the King as well."[1] Impoverished as the country was, Charles loaded her with gifts; besides money and jewels, she had from him the château of Beauté sur Marne, in order, as the chronicler quaintly puts it, that she might be Dame de Beauté in name as well as in fact; the châtellenies of La Roquecezière and Issoudun and the seigneuries of Bois-Trousseau, of Vernon and of Anneville were also gifts from her loyal lover.

In August, 1449, Charles set forth from Chinon on the expedition to Normandy. Agnes remained till January at Loches, when she joined the King at Jumièges, and there on 9th February her death occurred so suddenly that it was commonly attributed to poison. The Dauphin, it was said, had contrived the murder, and Jacques Cœur had seen it carried out.

Her death was edifying enough. *Elle eut moult belle contrition et repentance de ses péchés, et lui souvenoit souvent de Marie Egyptienne qui fut grande pécheresse . . . puis trespassa.* The body of the Belle des Belles was taken to Loches and interred in the Collegiate Church, to which she had been a generous donor. She was, indeed, always charitable and freely used the revenues given her by the King to help the poor and to found religious houses. In 1444 the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XI, had commanded an expedition into Switzerland; on his return he found the Belle des Belles in full possession at Court. Only four years before he had headed a rebellion against his father, the *Praguerie,* so called from a recent civil war in Bohemia. Charles and the Constable Richemont quickly suppressed it and the rebels were forgiven;

[1] Georges Chastellain.

but Louis felt that the affair was not so completely forgotten as he could wish. Anxious to conciliate his father, he tried to win over the favorite with handsome presents, but the two soon quarrelled, and Louis ended by hating her very heartily; the fact was so notorious that, as has been noted above, he was even accused of having caused her death.

After the accession of Louis XI the canons of Notre Dame de Loches, thinking to please him, asked to be allowed to remove the tomb of Agnes Sorel from the church, where it occupied the middle of the choir. They said it was a great scandal that the devout should have the memory of such a woman kept constantly before their eyes. Louis replied that certainly if they felt that way about it, they should remove the tomb, but that they must of course at the same time relinquish all her gifts and legacies. The canons kept the tomb. In 1772 a similar request was made, the canons setting forth in a long and wordy document the extreme inconvenience of having the tomb in the choir where, they said, it greatly interfered with the decent and orderly observance of the services. They asked for permission merely to remove it to a side chapel, where it would be quite as conspicuous, and they reiterated that they had no wish to offer a slight to the memory of their benefactress. Louis XV, after reading the paper through, curtly wrote on the margin: *Néant. Laissez ce tombeau où il est!* At last, however, under Louis XVI, the canons got their way and the tomb was placed in the nave. During the Revolution it was broken in pieces, but in 1806 the parts were put together and it was set up in its present position in the tower of the château built by Charles VII. When the tomb was removed from the choir the remains were placed in an urn, which, buried later in a neighboring cemetery, was eventually lost sight of.

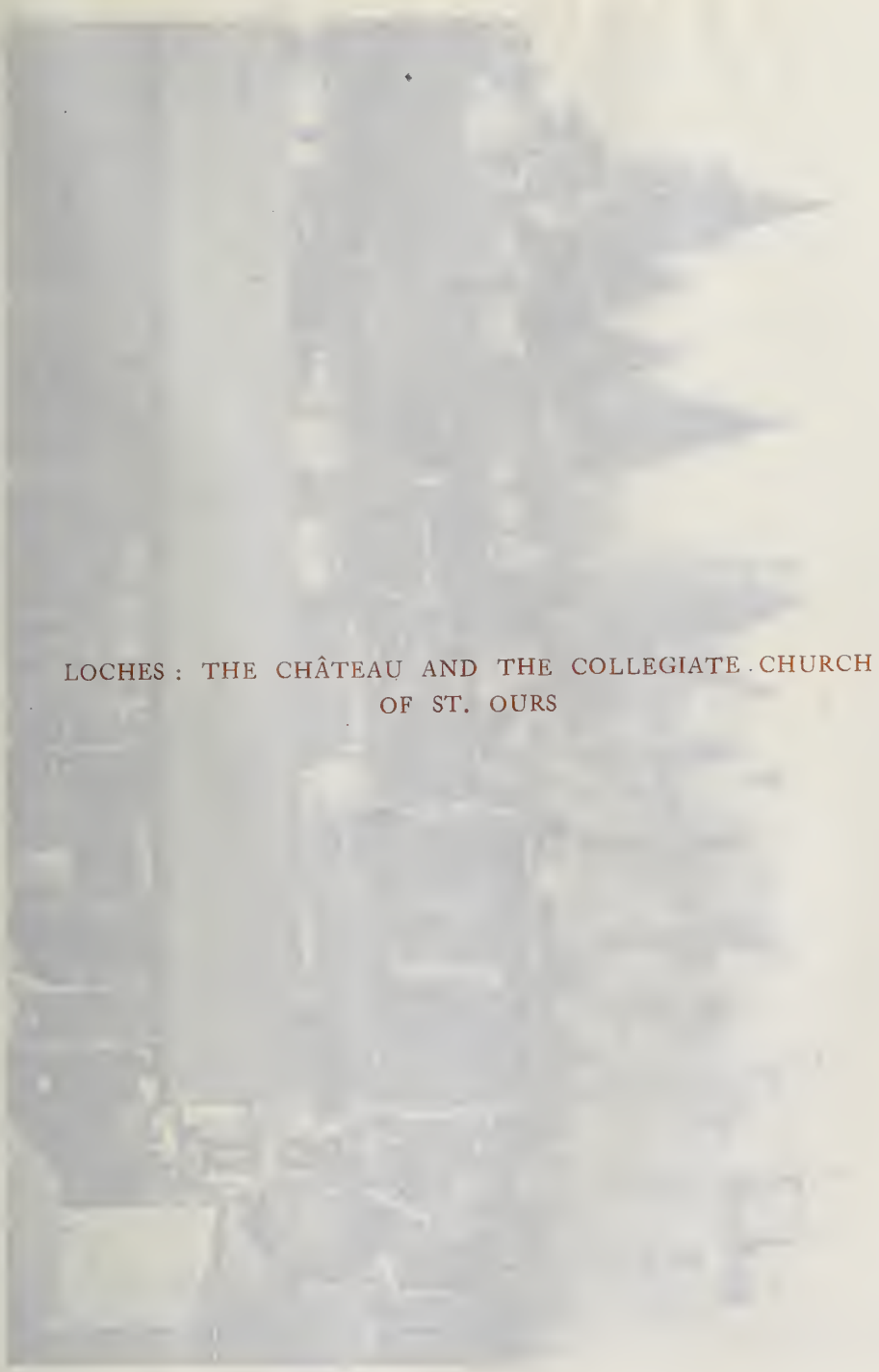
The sarcophagus is of black marble surmounted by a full-

length reclining statue, calm, chaste, the hands pressed together in an attitude of prayer. At the feet are two lambs in allusion to the name, Agnès, and at the head two little whispering angels support the cushion upon which the head rests. The inscription when translated reads, "Here lies the noble Damoyselle Agnes Seurelle, in her lifetime Lady of Beaulté of Roquesserie of Issouldun of Vernon-sur-Seine. Kind and pitiful to all men, she gave liberally of her goods to the Church and to the poor. She died the 9th day of February of the year of grace 1450. Pray for her soul. Amen."

To the château begun by Charles VII, Louis XI added what are still known as "the new rooms." Here his Queen, Charlotte of Savoy, passed much of her lonely and neglected life, but seldom visited by her husband, and completely without influence. Louis wished this effacement to be kept up even after his own death. "He ordered upon his death-bed that she should remain like an exiled woman in the Castle of Loches. 'T is probable, the Lady of Beaujeu, Anne, Louis's eldest and favourite child whom he named regent, would have found it difficult to know how to have acted between the respect she owed to her mother and the obedience she owed to the King, her father; but the Queen died a few months after the King; worthy the lamentations of the Court, if virtue was lamented there."[1]

The château was completed by Louis XII. In a tower at the west end there are two rooms known as the oratory and the bed chamber of Anne of Brittany. The latter is chiefly remarkable for the lovely view it commands, but the former, notwithstanding the whitewash with which at some time a vandal hand has covered it, is very exquisite. Carved in relief

[1] Pinot Duclos, "History of Louis XI."



LOCHES : THE CHÂTEAU AND THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST. OURS

all over the walls at regular intervals appears the ermine, the device of her house.

"As for her device, it is known that the Dukes of Brittany had adopted the ermine on account of its whiteness, and had added the words *Potius mori quam fœdari*" (better to die than to be tarnished).[1] Above the doors and windows and on the lower part of a richly carved altar are the cord and tassel,—the *cordelière* which, placed on either side of their arms by her grandfather and father, Francis I and II of Brittany, was preserved by the young Duchess. Anne built a convent at Lyons for the Cordeliers, and herself founded a sort of chivalric order for virtuous ladies, the members wearing the cord and tassel as a girdle, as did the Queen.[2]

The last additions to the château were the chancelleries built by Francis I and Henry II. It was during the reign of the former, that the townspeople erected their clock-tower, the Tour St. Antoine, still standing not far from the château. An even more striking memorial of this reign is the magnificent horse-chestnut tree whose spreading branches shade the entire terrace on the west. Tradition says that it was planted by King Francis himself, it may be in 1539, when he received the Emperor Charles V at Loches.

Three years earlier another foreign monarch had made a state entry into Loches, James V of Scotland, when he came to fetch his bride, Madeleine of France.

In 1539 Henry II and Catherine de Médicis were also there, but not long afterwards the Huguenots got possession of the

[1] Le Roux de Lincy, "Vie d'Anne de Bretagne."

[2] "Anne of Brittany adopted the cord and tassel both as a girdle and as a badge; her furniture, her hangings, her books, all are ornamented with it." Le Roux de Lincy.

town and kept it for three months; they pillaged the churches, but there was no bloodshed, as no one offered any resistance. During the period following the "St. Bartholomew," however, fearful scenes were enacted there.

"An order was issued from Paris directing the people at the sound of the tocsin to fall upon the religionists and kill them like so many mad dogs. They called it *'haler la grande lévrière'* " (setting on the hounds).[1] After this, royalty ceased to frequent Loches. There is notice of a visit paid there to Charles IX in 1571 by his brother-in-law, Henry of Navarre, but about this time the château was made over as a residence for the governor, and the buildings at the other end of the plateau, the donjon, the Martelet and round tower were used solely as barracks and prisons.

In the summer of 1793, under a ferocious *représentant du peuple* named Guimberteau, arrests were so frequent that all the prisons were filled to overflowing. "It was in consequence of this distressing state of affairs," says M. Charles d'Angers in his *Révolution en Touraine,* "that the château of Loches has been preserved. It was found necessary to use it as a prison and even to make certain needed repairs."

It is pleasant to find, in one case at least, the exigencies of the Terror preserving what otherwise would have fallen into ruin if indeed it had not been destroyed outright. Posterity could ill spare that beautiful and dignified château which, with its broad terrace overlooking the town and the Indre, and its charming gardens, still keeps up a sort of state as the seat of a sub-préfecture.

[1] Mezeray, "Hist. de France."

CHINON

CHAPTER V

CHINON

IN the latter half of the Vth century the Visigoths, who had already conquered most of Touraine, were disputing with the Romans for possession of the forts along the valley of the Loire. One of the strongest of these was the *castrum* of Chinon, planted upon a long and narrow and steep ridge overlooking the Vienne, not far below the junction of that river with the Loire.

As the key to their possessions in Aquitaine (Poitou and Guienne) this place was of especial value to the Barbarians. They rebuilt the Roman fortifications, then fallen into ruins, and were strongly intrenched there when, in the spring of 463, the Roman General Ægidius, after a victory won at Orléans, advanced down the Loire and laid siege to Chinon.

The town at that time probably consisted of a mere handful of houses grouped about a monastery lately founded by Saint Martin's disciple, Saint Mesme, and a line of cave-dwellings hewn out of the rock along the river front. At the approach of the Romans the inhabitants, with the neighboring country-people, fled to the citadel, and with them went Saint Mesme, then an old man, and his monks.

For a time the garrison held out bravely, then Ægidius managed to cut off their water supply and would soon have forced them to capitulate had not Saint Mesme come to the rescue. He prayed unceasingly throughout an entire night and at daybreak a storm of such unprecedented fury broke over both citadel and plain that, not only were the cisterns filled, but the enemy, seized with panic, raised the siege and fled. Not long after this the Romans were finally driven out of Gaul, and when Clovis, founder of the Merovingian dynasty, defeated Alaric II, in 481, the Visigoths were brought under his united rule.

From the time of Clovis (481-511) to that of Charles the Simple (893-923) Chinon was a royal fortress, then it passed to Thibaud, Count of Blois, frankly surnamed by his contemporaries *le Tricheur*—the Cheat.

This Thibaud was present in 945 at a conference held on the island of Picquigny in the Somme, between Arnoul, Duke of Flanders, and William Longsword, Duke of Normandy, when the latter was treacherously murdered. Thibaud married the widow, Liutgarde, but the Normans chose Richard, an illegitimate son of William Longsword, to be their Duke.

Seven years later Alain Barbetorte, Count of Nantes, Thibaud's brother-in-law, died, confiding to him the care of his young son and of the latter's inheritance. The "Cheat" married his sister, the boy's mother, to Fulk the Good, 2nd Count of Anjou, and then he seized half his nephew's estates for himself. With the revenues therefrom, says the Chronicle of Nantes, he built the three châteaux of Chartres, Blois, and Chinon.

All that is left of Thibaud's castle at Chinon is a part of the Tour du Moulin and of the adjoining curtain-wall in what is called the "Château de Coudray" at the western end of the plateau.

Fulk the Good's grandson and great-grandson, Fulk Nerra and Geoffrey Martel, wrested Touraine from Thibaud's descendants, the Counts of Blois, and it was at Chinon that Geoffrey Martel's younger nephew, Fulk the Surly, shut up his elder brother, whose inheritance he had usurped. This was in 1068. For twenty-six years the unfortunate Count, Geoffrey le Barbu, lay apparently forgotten in the donjon of Chinon. Then Pope Urban II directed his Legate in France, Hugo, Archbishop of Lyons, to procure an interview with the prisoner and to see what could be done to restore him to liberty and to his estates. The offer came too late; the captive's spirit was broken; he had lost even the desire to be free and the Legate advised that he should be left where he was. Nevertheless, the Pope was not satisfied, and when two years later he came to Touraine to hold a council at Tours and to preach the First Crusade, he made a point of seeing the prisoner himself and, with the co-operation of the young Count of Anjou, Fulk le Jeune, son of the usurper, he set Count Geoffrey free.

The square keep called the Tour de Trésor, the only existing tower of that date in the château, is probably the prison of this Count of Anjou, who lived to be an old man without ever having reigned.

For the next fifty years or so not much is heard of Chinon, until the Plantagenet Henry II of England, the greatest of all the Counts of Anjou, almost doubled the size of the fortress by extending it on the east and adding to the fortifications in other directions.

Henry Plantagenet was a grandson of Fulk the Young. His father, Geoffrey the Handsome, had married the ex-Empress Matilda, widow of the Emperor Henry V and a daughter of Henry I of England. His own marriage was hardly less ambitious. In 1152 Louis VII, King of France, committed what

the historians call "a grave political blunder"; he repudiated his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and sent her back to her duchy. The reason given was that they were related within the forbidden degrees; the actual reason doubtless was that after fifteen years of marriage there was still no heir. Yet France could better have spared a successor in the direct line than Aquitaine. The ex-Queen had an eventful journey home. First she was induced to stop at Blois by the Count, Thibaud V, who tried by persuasion and then by force to make her marry him out of hand. After escaping from Blois she was flying through Anjou, when word reached her that another suitor, Geoffrey, brother of the young Count of that province, was lying in wait for her at Port-au-Piles for the same purpose. Hastily changing her route Eleanor finally gained her own duchy in safety, but even then she was not allowed to remain long unmolested. The Plantagenets were determined, and within six weeks the lady was captured and married to Count Henry, Geoffrey's elder brother, though he was fifteen years her junior; thus her duchy was added to his domain.

"*Les Plantagenets avaient tous les bonheurs,*" writes one historian. On his father's death, a year previous to his marriage, Henry had inherited Maine, Touraine, Saintonge and a part of Berry and Auvergne. His claim to Normandy through his mother he made good by force; Aquitaine he got with his wife; and Anjou by making his brother Geoffrey accept a pension in its stead. Then Stephen of Blois, grandson of William the Conqueror, died (1154), and the fortunate young Count, whose French possessions already outnumbered those of the French King himself, succeeded to the throne of England. To crown all, four sons and a daughter were born to him in rapid succession, and in 1158 he and King Louis were conferring together

at Gisors over a treaty of marriage between the son of Henry and Eleanor, then three years old, and the infant daughter of Louis and his second wife, Constance of Castille.

Owing to the death of the Prince, this marriage never took place, but the treaty was renewed in favor of Henry's next son, Richard. The failure of the English King to keep to his bargain was one source of trouble later on.

With the murder of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1170, the tide of fortune seemed to turn. Henry, on receiving news of the murder, shut himself up for three days and could hardly be induced either to speak or to eat; then he pledged himself to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and did public penance at the Archbishop's tomb. Yet suspicion of his connection with the crime always clung to him and, together with the undutiful conduct of his sons, ruined the latter part of his life.

In 1180 Louis VII was succeeded on the throne of France by Philip Augustus, a vigorous young ruler, who took every chance to quarrel with his neighbor of Anjou, and to stir up trouble between the latter and his sons. After eight years of intermittent fighting a meeting was arranged between the two kings at Bon Moulins in Normandy. Henry II, old before his time, and anxious for peace, was struck with dismay when he reached the spot to see his eldest son, Richard, among the French barons.

"Richard," said he, "what are you doing here?"

"*Beau Sire,*" replied the other fluently, "I will tell you the exact truth. As I was riding here I chanced to meet the King of France and his retinue, and not wishing to avoid them I joined their company."

"Very well, very well," said the old King, "but I don't believe a word of it!"

The conference lasted three days. Philip Augustus insisted that his sister and Prince Richard should be married at once and that the latter should formally be acknowledged by his father as heir to the English throne and to all the French possessions. Henry demurred and asked for time, whereupon Richard burst out passionately that it was just as he expected, his father meant to disinherit him; and throwing himself at the feet of the French King, he did homage for all his father's provinces in France and begged for help to confirm him in his rights.

Henry fell back a few steps, the circle of lords and barons who had witnessed the scene broke up, and the lesser knights with their followers pressed in, curious to learn what had happened.

The King of England rode off alone, while Richard thenceforth remained with Philip Augustus.

After this, reverses followed one another so quickly that by June of the succeeding year Henry's friends were urging him to take refuge in Normandy, where he would still be safe from attack, but he would not listen. On the 12th he was at Mans. Philip Augustus and Richard appeared together before the walls and tried to take the place by assault. Henry set fire to the suburbs and drew up his forces for the attack, but the wind changing, the town became enveloped in flames, and the King of England, with his bastard son, Geoffrey, and seven hundred cavaliers, was obliged to fly for his life. Though very ill he rode twenty miles without drawing rein, and reached the château of Fresnaye before Philip and Richard, who had stopped at Mans to eat the dinner prepared for Henry, had time to overtake him. From Fresnaye the King went to Angers and from thence to Chinon, where he remained.

By July further resistance was impossible; Philip Augustus had won one battle after another and Henry was desperately ill. Another interview was arranged to take place on July 4th at Colombiers, near Villandri, between Azay-le-Rideau and Tours.

The day was excessively hot. Henry, hardly able to move, was lifted on his horse and arrived first at the rendezvous. All at once a violent paroxysm of pain seized him, gripping him in the feet, the legs, the whole body; he grew pale and red by turns. His followers carried him aside and had laid him down in the shade of a tree, when Philip Augustus and Richard arrived.

"Where is the King of England?" they asked. And when told of his condition they declared that he was only feigning illness. Henry thereupon dragged himself forward and the conference began.

One account says that when all the demands of the King of France had been conceded, Richard came forward to give and receive the "kiss of peace," but as he turned away he heard his father mutter: "Nevertheless, may God keep me alive till I have given you the punishment that you deserve!" He repeated this to Philip Augustus and they both laughed heartily.

Henry, too spent to return at once to Chinon, passed the night at Azay-le-Rideau. In the evening, as he lay upon his bed, he sent for one of his people, Roger Malchael, and ordered him to read aloud the list of the barons who had deserted to the King of France. The clerk unfolded the paper and was about to begin when he gave a sudden exclamation. "Sire," said he, "may Jesus Christ have mercy on my soul; but the very first name I see here is that of your son, Count John!"

"It is enough," said the old King; and turning his face to

the wall he lay for hours seemingly unconscious of all around him, and muttering words that no one could understand. The next morning he was taken back to Chinon and for the rest of that day his son Geoffrey sat with his father's head resting on his shoulder, fanning away the insects, while a knight supported the King's feet. Suddenly the dying man opened his eyes and, fixing them upon Geoffrey, he solemnly blessed him. He alone of all his children, he said, had ever treated him with respect and affection, and should he live he intended to make him the most powerful Prince of them all.[1] But this was not to be. The next day, feeling that his end was very near, he ordered them to carry him into the church of St. Melaine, which he had built in the château, and to lay him before the high altar, and there he presently expired. The servants instantly carried off all that was valuable in the royal apartments and even stripped the body. "The King of England was left naked as he came into the world except for his shirt and braies." Only, the following day, when the corpse was taken to Fontevrault for burial, one Guillaume de Trihan wrapped him in his own cloak.

Richard heard the news of his father's death at Tours. He went at once to Fontevrault, and the bystanders watched him curiously as he stood for long, gazing silently at the motionless form; but what his feelings were no one could guess. His face betrayed neither *joie ou tristesse, déconfort, courroux ou liesse.* After giving orders that his father's remains should receive every honor befitting his rank, he rode away. "And so they put the King of England most honorably into the ground."

The King of France had now no pretext for keeping up the

[1] After Henry's death Richard Cœur de Lion gave Geoffrey the Archbishopric of York, which his father had intended for him.

war, but he was extremely averse to giving up the provinces so lately won by his arms. All his victories had served for nothing but to strengthen a young and dangerous rival. He and Cœur de Lion went on a crusade to the Holy Land together, but they soon quarrelled. Philip Augustus came home and when Richard followed him he had to begin the conquest of his French lands all over again. In five years he died (1199) and all that he had regained his brother and successor, John Lackland, eventually lost.

In 1204-5 Philip Augustus made a triumphant campaign through Touraine, when almost the only serious resistance offered was at Loches and at Chinon. The latter place held out valiantly for a whole year under its Governor, Hubert de Bourg, and the breach through which the King of France at last entered may still be traced in the walls.

The next historical event of importance connected with the château of Chinon is the dramatic suppression of the Knights Templars in 1307-12.

The Order of Templars was founded after the First Crusade, about 1128, to police the Holy Land. Its headquarters were at Jerusalem near the Temple, hence its name. By the XIVth century, under the especial patronage of the Popes, the Order had become so powerful as to be considered by some a menace. The Knights did the banking business of Christendom, and princes and kings deposited their treasures with them.

In 1291 St. Jean d'Acre, the last Christian fortress in Asia, fell, and with it disappeared the sole *raison d'être* of the Order. But besides this the arrogance of the members and their enormous wealth had made them many enemies. The King of France, Philippe le Bel, determined to suppress them, in order, it is said, to seize the great treasure lying in the Temple at

Paris. By a *coup de main* he had every Knight of the Order in France arrested at the same moment (13th October, 1307). The Grand Master, Jacques de Molay, and others of the highest officers were sent off to be interrogated by Pope Clement V at Avignon, but on their way the whole party were suddenly taken ill, a singularly significant circumstance, and could get no further than Chinon. They were kept there and two Cardinals, Fridoli de Suzy, and Broncacoir, were sent to examine them in prison.

A year after they were all burned at the stake at Paris. The investigation dragged on till 1312, when the Pope abolished the Order.

The prison in which the unfortunate Knights were lodged at Chinon is probably the donjon de Coudray. It has been suggested that some carvings seen to-day at the left of the modern entrance were made by them during their imprisonment. These represent three kneeling Knights, one enveloped in a long mantle and holding a shield and sword. Above are the words: *Je requiers à Dieu pardon.*

During all this time and for two centuries later Chinon remained a royal fortress, but from the days of Philip Augustus to the time of Charles VII it was little frequented by the French Kings. Then it became the scene of great events. To make these clear it will be necessary to give a brief outline of the circumstances that led up to them.

Charles VII was the fourth King of the House of Valois. His great-great-grandfather, Philip of Valois, succeeded to the throne when all three sons of his uncle, Philip V, the Handsome, had died without heirs male; but his right had been questioned. Philip the Handsome had a daughter as well, Isabelle, married to Edward II of England. The law of succession had not yet

become fixed in France, and it was held by some that even if females were excluded from the throne in their own persons they might still transmit the right to their male offspring. If this were true, then Edward III, son of Edward II and Isabelle of France, was the rightful heir. The French barons, however, acknowledged Philip, son of Charles of Valois, brother of Philip the Handsome, as King (1328), and Edward III acquiesced in their decision.

Ten years later war broke out between the two countries, a war which was destined to endure throughout the greater part of five reigns, and for a hundred years to be the scourge of France.

The primary cause of this long and disastrous conflict was not the claim of King Edward to the French throne, though that soon became involved, but troubles in Guienne, which was held by Edward as vassal of the French crown; and in Flanders, upon whose flourishing manufactories England depended for her supply of cloth, while the Flemish people at the same time provided a market for English wool.

In August, 1346, the English won the battle of Crècy and followed it up by the siege and capture of Calais. Poitiers was won in September, 1356, and Philip VIth's successor, King John the Good, was taken prisoner and carried away captive to England.

Under their next king, Charles V, the French were more fortunate, and Bertrand Du Guesclin had almost driven the English out of France. Then came the unfortunate reign of Charles VI, the crazy king. A quarrel between the Duke of Orléans and Jean Sans Peur, Duke of Burgundy, and the murder of the former in the streets of Paris, resulted in civil war. The Duke of Burgundy began negotiations with the

English, and in October, 1415, Henry V of England won a great victory at Azincourt. Seven thousand of the flower of the French chivalry were left dead upon the field and scions of almost every noble house in France, besides five Princes of the Blood, were either killed or taken prisoner to England.

King Charles and the Dauphin, who, as a measure of prudence, had not been permitted to be present on the field, heard the dreadful news at Rouen. "They rode back to Paris accompanied by only a small retinue, and made their entry into the capital in utter silence. The King was dressed in a robe he had worn continuously for two years and the hat as well. His hair was long and hung down about his shoulders."

In December the Dauphin died, and his brother, the new Dauphin, followed him fifteen months later. The notorious Queen, Isabelle of Bavaria, was behaving so outrageously that she had to be exiled to Tours and shut up there in the Royal château.[1] The Duke of Orléans, son of the murdered Duke, taken prisoner at Azincourt, was carried off to England; and his father-in-law, the Constable Bernard VII d'Armagnac, become the head of the Orléans party, called thenceforward "Armagnac," had possession of Paris, where he organized a reign of terror in the name of the mad King and of his son, Charles, then Dauphin.

All over France the people were taking refuge in the towns from the English, the Burgundians, or the Armagnacs. The fields were left uncultivated, the cost of bread and wine and eggs rose to famine prices. The most dreadful disorder reigned everywhere; there was no organization, no leader, no army.

In October, 1416, the Duke of Burgundy met Henry V at Calais and entered into some sort of secret pact with him, then

[1] See p. 37.



ENTRANCE GATE TO CHÂTEAU OF CHINON BUILT BY HENRY PLANTAGENET

he went to Tours, liberated the Queen, and with her marched on Paris, where his followers drove out the Armagnacs with terrible massacres. The Provost of Paris, Tangui du Châtel, had barely time to snatch up the Dauphin in his arms and smuggle him out of the city, concealed in the folds of his long cloak.

Henry V meanwhile proceeded with the conquest of lower Normandy. He established a firm government, and many persons, weary of anarchy, submitted to him voluntarily; some of the neighboring lords entered into treaties with him.

Paris was now governed by Jean Sans Peur, who, while not openly supporting the English, did nothing to check them, and turned a deaf ear to the frantic appeals for aid sent by the citizens of Rouen, closely besieged by Henry.

The Constable Armagnac having been killed, the Dauphin, now sixteen years old, took the leadership of the party. In 1417 he was appointed Lieutenant-General of the kingdom by his father, and in the following year he took the title of Regent. Then the Duke of Burgundy, after failing in some negotiations with the English, concluded an alliance with the Dauphin. The two swore upon the Holy Evangels, the True Cross and their hopes of Paradise, together to drive the English from the country. When news of this reached Paris the bells were rung, there were processions in the streets, and Te Deums were sung. Yet in spite of all this Jean Sans Peur continued to send secret embassies to King Henry, and made no effort to stop the latter's advance on Paris. Another interview was arranged. Burgundy and the Dauphin met in the late afternoon of the 7th of September (1419) on the bridge of Montereau. Hot words were exchanged, the Dauphin charged the Duke with having failed to keep his promises, the Duke violently defended himself, and the meeting broke off in anger. Charles withdrew

and immediately after there were sounds of a struggle. The Duke of Burgundy fell to the ground stabbed in half a dozen places.

The Burgundian party declared that the murder was premeditated and at once stopped negotiations with the Dauphin, while the son of the murdered Duke, Philippe le Bon, passed over with his entire following to the English, carrying with him, moreover, the poor helpless King.

"Sire," said a monk of Dijon to Francis I in 1521, as he showed him the skull of Jean Sans Peur with a sword-cut in it; "Sire, there is the hole through which the English entered France."[1]

The Anglo-Burgundian alliance soon bore fruit. In May, 1420, a treaty of marriage was concluded at Troyes between Catherine of France and Henry V; in it Henry was called the "only true son of the King and Queen of France," while Charles was referred to as the "self-styled Dauphin," and his claim to the succession repudiated. Charles VI was to keep the throne during his lifetime, but Henry was to bear the title of "heir to the King of France," and in conjunction with the Duke of Burgundy to administer the government. Normandy, together with all the other places already won by him, was to remain his in appanage. Two weeks later the marriage took place and immediately afterwards the war against the Dauphin was resumed.

In August, 1422, Henry V died at the age of thirty-five, leaving a son not yet ten months old. In October of the same year Charles VI followed him. He was only fifty-three, but he seemed an old man. The King of France was buried at St. Denis; the only Prince present at the funeral was the Duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V and Regent for his infant

[1] See "Histoire de France," Ernest Lavisse; t. 4, p. 1. A. Coville.

nephew. After the sergeants-at-arms had broken their staves of office and had thrown them into the open grave, the king-at-arms cried aloud: "God give long life to Henry, by the grace of God, King of France and of England, our Sovereign Lord!"

The great weakness of the party of Charles VII, it has been said, was Charles himself. At first, as Dauphin, he had shown considerable energy. The alliance between the Burgundians and the English drove many waverers to his side. He held the south of France solidly and had pushed north as far as Chartres. Cut off from Paris, he had nevertheless established a seat of government at Bourges, hence the title given to him by derisive Burgundians—"the King of Bourges."

Then he suddenly seemed to lose all interest in the struggle. At the time of his accession he no longer accompanied his troops. While the English were conquering his kingdom he dreamed away the time among his châteaux in Berry, in Poitou, and in Touraine; caring for nothing but his approaching marriage with Marie of Anjou, and the pleasures and fêtes of his little court.

In appearance he did not cut a very gallant figure. "All his life the Dauphin had been weak and puny. His legs were thin, he was knock-kneed and awkward. His portraits, whether painted in youth or in old age, all give him the same aspect—that of a worn-out old man. The head is large and ugly, the nose long, the mouth thick and sensual, the chin heavy, the eyes small and furtive. It is the face of the son of a madman and of a dissolute woman, weighed down from infancy by a tragic destiny and by the burden of a fate too heavy for his frail shoulders to support."[1]

In his retirement Charles was surrounded first by one set

[1] "Histoire de France," Ernest Lavisse; t. 4, p. 2. Ch. Petit-Dutaillis.

of favorites and then another, all equally corrupt. They coined false money, pledged the crown jewels, stole the subsidies raised to carry on the war, and instead of making common cause against the English carried on civil wars among themselves. Conspiracy followed conspiracy. The favorite of the hour would be seized before the very eyes of the King; sometimes to be murdered, sometimes to be held for a heavy ransom, which Charles would inevitably pay. The Queen, Marie of Anjou, was both good and amiable, but without any more strength of character than her husband. Her strong-minded mother, Yolande of Arragon, and the Constable Richemont, brother of the Duke of Brittany, neither of them wholly admirable characters, were the only two people about the court who still worked for the recovery of the kingdom.

Richemont was obliged himself to be much away from court, but he wished to establish some one there upon whom he could rely to look after his interests. His unfortunate choice fell upon Georges de la Tremoïlle, "a big, fat man about forty years old, sensual, vain, ready to commit any infamy in order to satisfy his appetites." He had killed his first wife by ill usage, and had contrived the death of the last favorite, the Chamberlain Pierre de Giac, in order to marry his wealthy widow.

The English held all the north—Normandy, the Ile de France, most of Picardy and Champagne; Burgundy was their ally, and Brittany and Lorraine were neutral. South of Paris the country between the Seine and the Loire was already partly won and the invasion was creeping steadily down.

Everywhere throughout the territory of the English the most dreadful misery prevailed. There was no security for person

or property. The towns were full of houses in ruins, the fields were devastated; merchants, mechanics and farmers alike complained that they could no longer make a living.

In the Armagnac country things were little better, for a state of utter anarchy prevailed and "the good old rule" was everywhere supreme.

In 1424, however, Charles, aroused by signs of discord among his enemies, nerved himself for a great effort. For a long time there had been no pitched battles; he now collected an army, composed in great part of Italian, Spanish and Scottish troops, and on the 17th of August, 1424, gave battle to the English at Verneuil.

The result was a disaster nearly as appalling as that of Azincourt. The Scottish contingent was annihilated, and Charles, utterly discouraged and hopeless, fell back into his usual state of apathy.

A year after the battle of Verneuil the Duke of Bedford, the Regent, went to England. During his absence the war languished, but in the summer of 1428 the Council of the (English) Regency at Paris determined to occupy Orléans, one of the strongest places in France, and necessary to them as a base of future operations. The Duke of Salisbury brought over an army from England, which landed at Calais, and arrived before Orléans on 7th October, 1428.

The court meantime was at Chinon, where the States-General were also assembled, but the supreme authority was La Tremoïlle. He had got his patron, Richemont, the best Captain the French possessed, disgraced, and was carrying on a war with him in Poitou. At the very moment when the English arrived before Orléans the partisans of the

Constable and of La Tremoïlle were carrying fire and sword through this rich province, and Richemont was besieging Ste. Neomaye, held by one of La Tremoïlle's captains.

Appeal after appeal was sent out from Orléans. The States-General implored the King to recall Richemont and voted five hundred thousand francs for the relief of Orléans, but nothing was done. The court was taken up with discussing plans for Charles to take refuge in Arragon or Scotland, and La Tremoïlle got possession of the money raised for the war and used it for his own purposes.

Such, roughly, was the situation when Jeanne d'Arc, "the peasant-maid of Domremy," came to Chinon to deliver France.

Jeanne's own account of her call is very explicit.[1] She was born, she says, in the village of Domremy, on the Meuse, the eastern frontier of France. From her mother she learned her Pater, her Ave Maria, and her Credo. She was about thirteen when she began to hear Voices. The first time it was mid-day, in her father's garden, and she was much frightened. She heard them frequently after that; they ordered her at last to "go into France and to raise the siege of the city of Orléans." They also told her to conduct the King to Rheims for consecration. In the beginning of the year 1429, directed by the Voices, she went to Vaucouleurs, which was the nearest military station, and asked the commanding officer, Robert de Baudricourt, to give her letters to the King. After several repulses she got her way. Baudricourt gave her the letters and a sword, and the people of Vaucouleurs provided her with a horse, a black doublet, a short grey coat, and a black woollen cap. She wore her black hair short, and cut round in the bowl-shaped

[1] See Quicherat. "*Proces de condemnation et de rehabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc*," *etc.*, 1841-1849.

fashion of the day. Thus equipped she set out on her ride to Chinon, accompanied by a knight, a squire, and two servants.

In his evidence given at the process of rehabilitation, the knight (Jean de Novelemport, called Jean de Metz) says that the journey took eleven days, "always riding towards the said town of Chinon." They travelled usually at night for fear of the Burgundians and the English, who were masters of the roads. Jeanne, fully dressed, always slept between him and the squire, Bertrand de Poulangey. She liked to hear Mass whenever it was possible, but owing to the danger they were only able to do this twice. Jean de Metz says: "I had absolute faith in her, her language and her ardent belief in God influenced me. She inspired me with such respect that for nothing in the world would I have dared to molest her. While we were with her we found her always good, simple, pious."

Arrived at Chinon, Jeanne found lodgings with a "worthy woman," not far from the château. Rumors of her mission had gone abroad, and there was considerable curiosity to see her, a feeling that was increased by an incident that occurred when she had been there some days.

A drunken soldier riding by hailed her: "So, you are the Maid!" he cried, adding some horrid blasphemy. Jeanne regarded him calmly. "So near thy end, dost thou yet blaspheme thy God!" she observed, and passed on; but within the hour the man, attempting to ford the Vienne, fell from his horse and was drowned.

The court, all this time in a great state of indecision, was not reassured by the incident. It was an age when everyone was afraid of sorcerers. The panegyrist of the Constable Richemont says of that hard-headed soldier: "He was very good and religious and burned more sorcerers than any other

man of his time." Jeanne was therefore closely watched and examined more than once before it was thought safe for the King to receive her.

At last, however, on the evening of 25th February, the Count of Vendôme came to conduct her to the château. They climbed the steep and narrow road, passed through the great gate of Henry Plantagenet, and arrived at the "Château du Milieu," built largely by Charles VII himself. Here, in the Grand'Salle, the King was awaiting the peasant-maid, who said she was come to restore him to his kingdom.

The huge room was lighted by fifty torches; over three hundred cavaliers, men-at-arms and members of the clergy were assembled. Grouped about the King were the Archbishop of Rheims, the Duke of Alençon, La Tremoïlle, Charles de Bourbon and others. Coming suddenly from the darkness without into all this glare and stir, Jeanne might well have felt frightened. If so, she gave no sign.

Advancing to about a "lance-length" from the King, she doffed her woollen cap—she had pretty manners—and kneeled down.

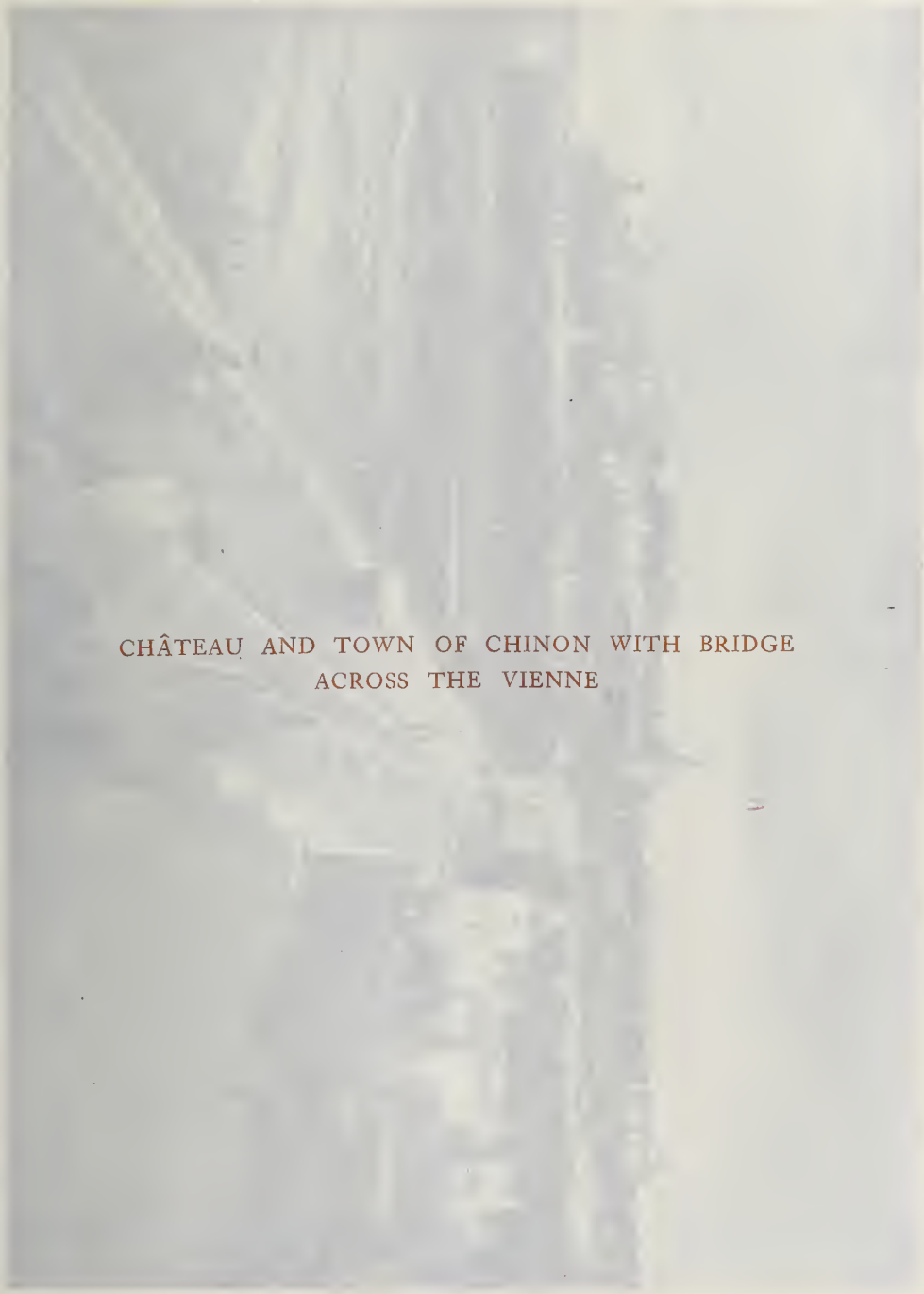
"God give you long life, Gentle Prince," said she.

"I am not the King, Jeanne," said Charles. "There he is, over there," pointing to a far more richly clad cavalier who stood by.[1]

"In God's name, Gentle Prince, you are he and none other," she replied with perfect confidence.

Some conversation followed, but Charles appeared not to

[1] There is no reason for thinking that Charles purposely disguised himself in mean attire in order to test the Maid. He was a spendthrift and squandered money as soon as he got it, living between whiles almost in penury. His credit was so bad that there were times when his old doublets had to be made to serve by putting in new sleeves, and when he could not buy himself shoes. Only the year before the citizens of Tours had presented the Queen with some pieces of linen, knowing her to be in need of chemises.



CHÂTEAU AND TOWN OF CHINON WITH BRIDGE
ACROSS THE VIENNE

be much impressed. Then she asked him to speak with her aside, she had a "sign" which she would give him in private. They went apart, and the bystanders saw that the King was interested and excited by something that she told him. When the interview was over his manner had changed, he was cheerful and confident and ordered that Jeanne should be lodged within the castle.[1] She was taken to the Donjon de Coudray and placed in charge of a "noble matron" in the Governor's quarters. On the way Jeanne stopped at a little chapel dedicated to Saint Martin; she remained a long time kneeling before the altar, and when she came out they saw that she had been weeping. When asked why, she said that her Angels (Saint Michael, Saint Catherine and Saint Margaret) had appeared to her and that it had grieved her to see them depart. "I wept. Willingly would I have gone with them, that is to say—my soul."

After weeks of discussion and delay it was at last decided to adopt Jeanne's carefully thought-out plans for the relief of Orléans, but she had first to submit to a further searching examination at Poitiers. At length everyone appeared to be satisfied; troops were mobilized at Blois, and on 28th April, 1429, the army marched out singing the *Veni Creator*. Jeanne rode at the head, accompanied by her white banner, borne before, on which were painted a representation of God the Father, the fleur-de-lys, and the words "Jhesus Maria." Chinon saw her no more.

In but little over a year the Maid had done everything she

[1] Much was made of this "sign" at her trial. Jeanne at first refused to answer any questions about it, but later she told them in the form of an allegory. It appears that Charles had long been troubled with doubts about his birth. The notorious life led by his mother, Isabelle of Bavaria, and her behavior towards him, had made him think that he might after all not be a son of Charles VI, but he had never spoken of this to any one. When therefore Jeanne announced that she had been directed to assure him that he was indeed the legitimate heir to the throne, it appeared to him to be nothing short of miraculous.

set out to do. She had delivered Orléans, she had led Charles to Rheims to be consecrated, she had set on foot the redemption of France. In May, 1430, while attempting to relieve Compiégne, besieged by Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, she was thrown from her horse and made prisoner by a Picardian archer in the service of the Bastard of Wandonne, a follower of Jean de Luxembourg.

The news quickly spread over all France, but not a hand was raised to save her. The King, if he would not fight for her, might either have bought or exchanged her. He did neither, and after six months she was sold to the only bidder—the English; no one else apparently wanted her.

Jean de Luxembourg received ten thousand *livres turnois*[1] for his prize, and the Bastard of Wandonne a pension. What the archer who actually made the capture got is not stated.

In February, 1431, the Maid was taken to Rouen, then in the hands of the English, and tried on a charge of heresy before an ecclesiastical court presided over by Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, in whose diocese she had been taken. She was confronted by more than a hundred assessors, two or three of them English, the rest Frenchmen belonging to the Burgundian party.

The trial lasted till the end of May; Jeanne had no counsel, but defended herself shrewdly and ably throughout. At the very last, when she saw what was going to happen if she persisted, she became frightened, and there was a brief lapse; but after that there was not so much as a tremor. She was declared guilty of heresy, condemned, and handed over to the secular arm of the law (the English) to be burned at the stake on 30th May, 1431.

[1] At that time the intrinsic value of a *livre turnois* was only about three francs.

Twenty-four years later, at the solicitation of her family, Pope Calixtus ordered an investigation; the trial of Jeanne d'Arc was then pronounced wicked and illegal, the findings were annulled and the Maid was rehabilitated.

"Through the valor and ability of this young girl Charles VII recovered (in thirteen months) Orléans, Vendôme, Dunois, most of Champagne, la Brie, Chalonne, Rennes, Valois, and the counties of Clermont and Beauvais. On the east her successes had induced Réné of Anjou to revolt against the suzerainty of Henry VI, thus interposing between the English and Burgundian countries a vast region friendly to the King."

Such were the results of a campaign of thirteen months succeeding many years of almost uninterrupted defeats. The Maid's reward was a martyr's crown and undying fame.

. . . . . .

Soon after arriving at Chinon you begin to meet with reminders of the Maid. There are the Place Jeanne d'Arc, and the Quaie Jeanne d'Arc, and even the double-decked scow Jeanne d'Arc, where the housewives of Chinon wash their soiled clothes; and, in the centre of the Place, a statue of Jeanne d'Arc representing her in a violent state of agitation madly plunging over dead bodies; but none of these honors make up for the loss of the well on whose brim she stepped when alighting after her long ride from Vaucouleurs. It was destroyed in comparatively recent times.

Passing along the shady quay and by a statue of Rabelais, who, it is thought, was born at Chinon, a spot is presently reached from which a comprehensive view of the castle may be had.

The ground begins to rise not far from the river-bank, and the town is drawn out in a long, narrow fringe along the lower part of the incline, and threaded by steep and tortuous little

streets. When it becomes too sheer for houses, tiny gardens and vineyards are scooped out of the rocky soil. Above these there is a space of rock and wall and scanty verdure through which a stone-paved road slants sidewise to where an arched bridge spans the moat and brings you to Henry II's feudal gateway.

From where you stand you can distinctly mark the limits of the three groups of buildings which compose the château. On the extreme right, above the line of the road, rises the square bulk of the Fort St. Georges built by King Henry and called after the patron saint of his kingdom over the water. It is now completely in ruins. In the middle, indicated by the tall tower of the gateway on the one hand and a close mass of walls and towers and gables on the other, is the château du Milieu, built by Henry II and Charles VII, and beyond that, at the western end of the plateau, is the château de Coudray, the oldest part of all, terminating in the round Tour du Moulin and a square, heavily buttressed supporting wall.

After passing through the town and climbing the hillside—gaining at every step wider and more radiant views of the valley—you reach the bridge and the gate. The latter, imposing, and nearly intact, still preserves its fortress-like character, but the interior of the château is a surprise. It is a great, overgrown, neglected garden, where crumbling walls and ruined towers start up from amidst a tangle of shrubbery and trees—vast, sun-bathed, deserted.

A path leads straight ahead of you, following the line of the heavy curtain-wall, and presently there comes into view the gable end of what was once a two-storied building rising from a carpet of greensward dotted over with white clover. Walls and floors are gone, this only is left, but, clinging to it yet, are two wide stone fire-places, the one above the other.



Scanty and forlorn as the ruin is, it yet has power to thrill you, for there, where the upper fire-place marks the line of the second floor, was the Grand'Salle where Jeanne d'Arc and the King first met.

Following the way she probably took when the momentous interview was over, you pass through the armory, the kitchen, the servants' hall, the bake-house and the store-room of the château du Milieu, and cross the stone bridge that now spans the deep moat of the château de Coudray. Immediately on the right rises the donjon where she was lodged, and close by a few stones, overgrown with grass and ivy, are all that are left of that "little chapel" where she lingered to pray, and wept to see the Angels leave her.

The entrance to the donjon is modern, but on the left are to be seen the carvings attributed to the Knights Templar who were confined there later. The stair is the same as that up and down which the sturdy little figure of the Maid came and went throughout all those anxious weeks of uncertainty, but there is no tradition as to which room she occupied.

Three years later an event took place here that further contributed to the King's regeneration.

Some of the more resolute of Charles's advisers determined that at all costs Georges de la Tremoïlle must be got rid of. They laid their plans, gained over the Governor of the château, and one night towards the end of June (1433) were admitted by a small postern door to the château de Coudray, where the favorite was lodged. Their idea was merely to take him prisoner, but he, awakening suddenly to find his room full of armed men, seized his sword, and there was a scuffle, in the course of which one of the party drove his dagger into La Tremoïlle's stomach down to the hilt. He was so enormously fat, however, that the wound did little harm. They carried him off to the castle

of Montrésor and kept him there till a ransom had been paid (but not this time by Charles) and he had given security that he would never again attempt to see the King.

Charles seemed rather relieved than otherwise to be rid of him and submitted quietly to be taken in charge of by his mother-in-law and the Constable Richemont. "La Tremoïlle's reign was at an end; it would have been difficult indeed for France not to be the gainer by the change."

Naturally at a place where Charles VII made such frequent and such lengthy sojourns some association with Agnes Sorel is to be expected. She and the King first met in 1443.[1] He built her a house in the Park Roberdeau, lying on the north-west of the château, and the guide speaks vaguely of "a secret passage-way that once led from the Tour d'Argentin in that direction." There is no trace, however, of any such passage, and Charles's relations, moreover, with the "belle des belles" were too frankly admitted to make one necessary. At the beginning she lived at court, and it is told that one day in the year 1444, when the Queen and all her ladies were assembled in one of the rooms at Chinon, the Dauphin (afterwards Louis XI) rode up to the castle, booted and spurred, dismounted and entered. Walking straight up to Agnes Sorel, he began to abuse her violently and finally struck her, then turning on his heel, he marched out and away, and was next heard of as having betaken himself to the camp of the Duke of Burgundy.

After his father's death (1461) Louis gave Chinon as a residence for his mother, Marie of Anjou. He was seldom there himself, but in 1473 the whole Court assembled at Chinon to witness the marriage of the historian, Philippe de Commines, to the "noble demoiselle Hélène de Chambes." Commines was later

[1] See p. 101.

made Governor of the château, when he repaired the castle walls and rebuilt the church of St. Etienne below in the town. The interior of this church has been restored out of all interest, but the west portal is still untouched and beautiful. Above are seen Commines's arms—*gueulles au chevron d'or et trois coquilles.*

Further west and directly below the château du Milieu rises the white-pointed spire of the church of St. Maurice, founded about 1160 by Henry II of England. Part of his work still remains a good example of a type of architecture so characteristic of his time as to be named by some French writers *le style Plantagenet.*

Though not much at Chinon himself, Louis XI used it occasionally as a lodging for his "guests." He there shut the young Duke of Alençon into a cage for three months in the dead of winter for having presumed to lay plans to go to Brittany in order to escape from the persecutions of the King. His food was passed in to him through the bars on the end of a prong as though he had been some dangerous wild beast, and he was only freed at last on the condition of having a royal garrison quartered in every strong place in his domain.

Rabelais, whose name is associated with Chinon, whose statue ornaments the quay, and whose birthplace is even pointed out, may, it is true, have been born there (about 1495), but if so, his connection with the place soon ceased. He was educated for the priesthood at Fontenay-le-Comte, was a member first of the Cordeliers and later of the Benedictines, studied at the University of Montpelier, practised medicine at Lyons, travelled about in France and Italy in the trains of various patrons, and died at Paris about 1553.

In 1532 the first rough sketch of his most famous work

appeared under the title of *Les Grandes et inestimables Chroniques du grant et énorme Géant Gargantua.* This he expanded later into *Pantagruel: Les horribles et espouvantables faits et prouesses du trés renommé, Pantagruel, roy des Dipsodes . . . fils du grand géant Gargantua.*

One can fancy Rabelais, a tiny lad, running with the other little boys of the town, to watch Cæsar Borgia's arrival in state at Chinon in 1498. Pope Alexander VI had approved Louis XII's action in divorcing his wife, Jeanne of France,[1] and was now sending his son to claim the reward. Cæsar Borgia's entry into Chinon (21st December) "surpassed in magnificence the triumphs of the Emperors at Rome." He brought with him the Pope's pledge to facilitate Louis's marriage with Anne of Brittany, and in addition a Cardinal's hat for Georges d'Amboise.[2] In return Cæsar got the province of Valentinois, erected in his favor into a duchy, the command of a company, a fixed income, and above all a promise of help in arranging a marriage for him. This last part was not accomplished without difficulty. It required the intervention of Georges d'Amboise and even of Anne of Brittany before Alain d'Albret, not an especially scrupulous person, could be induced to give his daughter Charlotte in marriage to this "good and worthy personage, sober and discreet."

After the close of the XVth century hardly anything more of interest is heard of as taking place at Chinon. In 1626 a royal decree ordered the destruction of all the castles and fortresses in the interior of France. The decree was never carried into effect, and at Chinon the townspeople protested against it on account of the danger to the houses below. Some years later the château

[1] See p. 185.

[2] See p. 314.

was given to Cardinal Richelieu, but he did not care for it and allowed it to fall into ruin; it was never again restored.

Seized by the State during the Revolution, Chinon is now the property of the government and is used as a sort of public park; it is this fact that makes it one of the most satisfactory of all the châteaux to visit, as the caretaker, after reciting her lesson with dull fidelity, leaves you to yourself to wander at will among the gardens and the ruins.

You may stand with Thibaud the Cheat on his Tour du Moulin and gaze towards Anjou, out of which the enemies of his house were to arise; you may mark the steep road up which the dying Henry II was carried, or, in a grassy solitude, trace the spot where he presently expired; you may climb the stair trodden by the Pucelle, or kneel with her on the stones of the "little chapel" and listen for her Voices; or you may rest upon the stone window-seats of the château du Milieu, and with the gentle, patient Marie of Anjou watch the green river as it sweeps through the valley below. Left to yourself and amid such surroundings it would be a feeble imagination indeed that should fail to reconstruct some at least of the strange and romantic episodes which have had Chinon for their scene.

LANGEAIS

CHAPTER VI

LANGEAIS

IN strong contrast with the ruined state of Chinon is that of the XVth century castle of Langeais, which stands at the junction of the Loire with the little river Roumer, and which is said to be one of the best examples of military architecture in France.

In 992 Fulk Nerra, Count of Anjou, who had been meddling in the affairs of Brittany, won a battle at Nantes which gave him the control of that duchy. Conan, Count of Nantes, was killed, and the Count of Anjou took possession of Nantes in the name of the little Breton Count, Judicael, and appointed one of his own people to administer the government. This done, he turned his attention to Touraine, which then belonged to his brother-in-law, Odo, Count of Blois. Watching his opportunity, he seized the rocky promontory at the mouth of the Roumer, and built upon it a strong square keep to be at once an outpost for his capital of Angers and a menace to the rival town of Tours. Here Odo besieged Fulk and drove him out, to be himself besieged in turn, and their successors did the same until at last when Geoffrey Martel had completed the conquest of Touraine[1] that province and Anjou were united under one ruler.

[1] See p. 61.

In the beginning of the XIIIth century, when the quarrel broke out between the King of England and his nephew, young Arthur of Brittany, Philip Augustus, King of France, took part with the latter against his uncle, just as he had aided John against Richard Cœur-de-Lion, and both of them against their father, Henry II.[1] In return Arthur swore fealty to the King of France for Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, and rewarded the French barons who fought for him with castles and lands. In this way Langeais passed to one Robert de Vitré, who, in 1206, ceded it to the King, Philip Augustus.

During the latter part of the reign of Saint Louis (1226-1270) a certain Pierre de la Broce, described as *chirurgien et valet-de-chambre du roi*, laid the foundation of a career of extraordinary prosperity by curing his royal master of an obstinate affection of the leg. In reward for this service he was given some lands and the office of Chamberlain. Louis's successor, Philip III, the Bold, conceived an especial liking for La Broce, and so loaded him with benefits that when a notary later on was making out an inventory of the favorite's possessions he wrote a marginal note to the effect that had the King after his return from Tunis attended to nothing but the presents which he made to La Broce he would still have been kept busy. Among other gifts the favorite received the *ville et châtellenie et prévôté de Langes en Touraine*, with all fiefs and domains thereunto appertaining, and there he lived in great style, courted by all the neighboring barons, and by crowned heads as well, and even by the Pope, when the Holy See wanted some favor from the French Court, where La Broce was known to be supreme.

The Chamberlain altered Fulk Nerra's donjon into some-

[1] See p. 69.

thing more habitable for himself and his large family, and it is thought that he had already begun to build the present château when, more sudden even, and swift, than his rise to power, came the end.

His master Philip had married for his second wife Marie de Brabant, a young and headstrong Princess, who did not fancy the Chamberlain's influence over her husband. Instead of trying to ingratiate himself with the Queen, La Broce made the fatal mistake of insinuating things against her. The Dauphin, Philip's son by his first wife, Isabelle of Arragon, had recently died; La Broce hinted that the Queen knew more about the cause of his death than she would care to admit, and that, unless a strict watch were kept, the other two Princes might shortly follow their brother.

When the Queen heard of these slanders, she lost no time in retaliating. Word was brought from the French Ambassador at the Court of Castile that someone was betraying the secrets of France. Suspicion fastened upon the Chamberlain; he was seized, shut up in the tower of Joinville, and, without being given an opportunity to defend himself, was hanged at Montfaucon in June, 1278.

People were dumbfounded at this sudden punishment for they knew not what; it was said that the King had even protested against the execution, but without avail, and the gossip found its way into current verse:[1]

"L'an mil deux cent septante et huit
S'accordèrent li barons tuit [tout]
A Pierre de la Brosse pendre.
Pendu fut sans reançon prendre
Contre la volonté le roy

[1] "Les Fabliaux de Brabazant."

Fu-il pendu, si com je croy
Mien escient qu'il fut desfest [mon avis est]
Plus par envie que par fet."

All of La Broce's property was confiscated, and Langeais once more reverted to the crown.

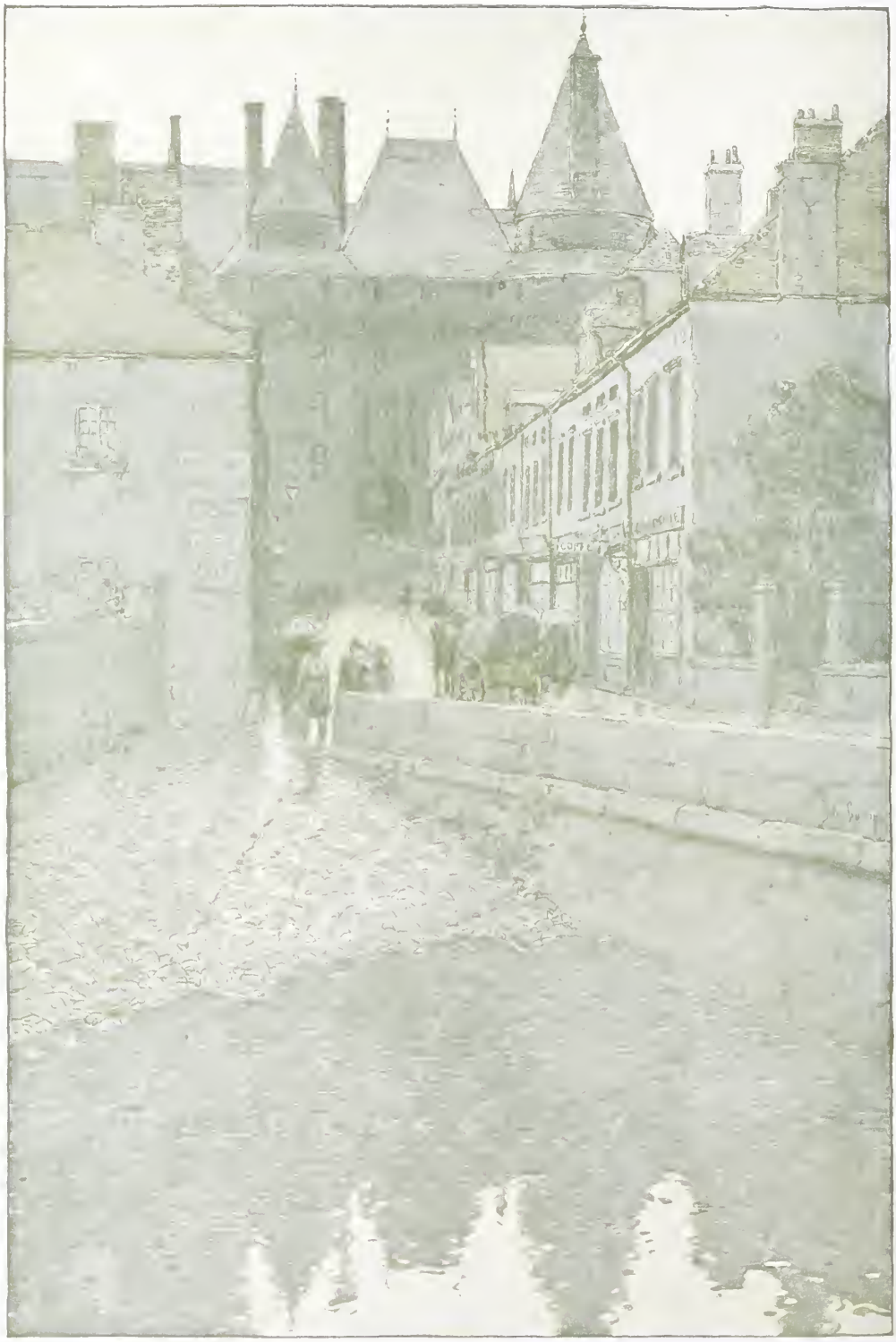
Even if it is true that the unfortunate Chamberlain began the present château, the main part of the work was done in the XVth century by order of Louis XI, when Jean Bourré, one of his ministers of finance, was Governor.

Money had to be found. *"Allez-vous-en à Paris,"* writes the King on one occasion to the distracted minister of Finance, *"et trouvez de l'argent en la boete à l'enchanteur."*

Whether the money for Langeais was found in the Magician's box or elsewhere, there was enough of it to do the work handsomely and well, and it has had the good fortune to be admirably restored in our day. Jean Bourré, at about the same time that Langeais was being built, bought for himself a property in Anjou called Plessis-du-Vent. He changed the name to Plessis-Bourré and built there a château, which is still standing, and which closely resembles that of Langeais.

The plan of Langeais consists of three parts, a façade terminating at either end in a tower, a wing, and the donjon where a garrison, sore pressed, might make its final stand. This donjon was shut off from the rest of the building by an enormously thick wall, now pierced by a passageway, but which then could only be reached from the battlements. Along the roof on the side towards the town runs a *chemin de ronde,* partially overhanging the walls and provided at short intervals with openings in the floor, through which missiles and boiling pitch and oil could be dropped on the heads of besieging foes.

Up here, looking through the loopholes, one understands



APPROACH TO THE FOURTH CHASM OF EIGHTH CIRCLE

APPROACH TO THE GATE OF THE CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS

better why Fulk Nerra planted his keep at this particular spot, especially when bearing in mind that the system of dykes and levees by which the waters of the Loire are now confined to their channel had not then been constructed, and that the river which seems so far away to-day once washed the foot of the rock on which the stronghold stands.

From this level can be seen the forest of Chinon lying off to the south, and near its edge the castle of Ussé, supposed to be the scene of a XVth century romance once very popular: the *Hystoire et plaisante cronique du petit Jehan de Saintré et de la jeune dame des Belles-Cousines,* a fourteenth century crusader, and a Princess of France.

On the northeastern horizon rise the twin towers of the Cathedral of Tours; nearer, on the Cher, is Villandry, where Henry II of England had his final interview with Philip Augustus, King of France, and with his own son Richard.[1] Still nearer, but further north, is the "Pile de Cinq-Mars," as the lofty tower is called, which, with its five little pyramids and the absence of any kind of opening, has thus far baffled the archæologists. They think it may be of Roman origin and that it served as a beacon, but no one certainly knows.

About a mile from this tower once stood the château of the Marquis de Cinq-Mars, a youth, who, after owing all his good fortune to Cardinal Richelieu, plotted his benefactor's death. The Cardinal, in order to counteract Mlle. de Hautefort's influence over the King, Louis XIII, introduced young Cinq-Mars at court. The move was so successful that in six months Mlle. de Hautefort had been sent away, and Cinq-Mars was in high favor; though only eighteen, Louis had even made him Grand Écuyer of France. Richelieu, however, would not

[1] See p. 117.

take "Monsieur le grand's" new dignities seriously; he treated him like a school-boy and scolded him sharply when he meddled in politics. It was never a hard matter to find enemies of the Cardinal, and the Marquis, much offended, hatched the plot known as the "conspiracy of Cinq-Mars." It failed conspicuously, for the conspirators were as so many babes in the hands of Richelieu. Before the first step could be taken he had every detail laid before him; the proofs were shown to the King, who was powerless to save his favorite, and in September, 1642, Cinq-Mars and his friend and confidant, Auguste de Thou, were beheaded.

The one great historical event of which Langeais was the scene was the marriage there in December, 1491, of Anne of Brittany and Charles VIII, and it was in the Grand'Salle that the wedding festivities took place. The bride, the elder daughter and heiress of Francis II, Duke of Brittany, was a self-willed little person who, though barely twelve years old at the time of her father's death, had formed her own line of policy and was bent at all costs on preserving the independence of her duchy. In order to do this she determined never to marry her suzerain, the King of France, if she could possibly avoid it. Her position was a difficult one. In her infancy she had been betrothed to Prince Edward of England, the son of Edward IV, but he had been murdered in the Tower of London by his uncle of Gloucester, afterward Richard III.

Now, all her neighbors were wanting to marry her and to get control of her duchy, without regard to discrepancy of age or the circumstance of having another wife already. There was, first, Maximilian of Austria, titular King of the Romans, the son of the Emperor Frederick III, whose wife, Mary of Burgundy, had died in 1482; then came Alain, Sieur d'Albret,



VIEW OF CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS FROM THE COURT-YARD

also a widower, forty-five years old, and the father of eight children; Louis, Duke of Orléans, married already to Jeanne of France; and finally, King Charles himself, but twenty years of age and in many respects the most suitable aspirant of them all, though he, too, had been married when twelve years old to Maximilian's daughter, Margaret, aged three.

All the suitors sent armies into Brittany to conduct their wooings; Maximilian's Flemish and Spanish troops threatened Rennes, while Charles's army pillaged and wasted the surrounding country. The Breton Marshal de Reux, a partisan of Alain d'Albret, was treating with the English and receiving reinforcements from them at Nantes, where he had set up an opposition government to that of the young Duchess established at Rennes. In 1490 Anne's advisors decided that her best hope lay in the support of Austria. She and Maximilian were accordingly married by proxy, in December of that year; but the future Emperor, who had not time even to go to his own wedding, was far too much occupied with affairs in the Netherlands to do anything for Brittany, and the marriage brought no relief to that unhappy province. Then d'Albret, angered at the somewhat scornful rejection of his own suit, gave Nantes into the hands of the French; the most influential among the Breton nobles began to waver; and finally a powerful army, raised by the Regent of France, laid siege to Rennes.

Money and food soon gave out and the foreign mercenaries revolted. Charles offered to treat. He promised the Duchess a hundred thousand crowns a year to resign the government of Brittany; she could select her own place of residence—Nantes and Rennes excepted—and she was to have her choice among three husbands, Louis of Luxembourg, the Duke of Nemours, and the Count of Angoulême.

To these offers Anne replied that she was already married to the King of the Romans, and should he fail to acknowledge her she should still consider herself his wife and never under any circumstances would she take another husband. Should he die, thus leaving her free to remarry, she would consider no one but a king, or, at the very least, the son of a king. The French bribed her foreign troops to desert her, and persuaded her advisors that the only course left her was to marry their King. Dunois, Louis of Orléans, and others of her counsellors argued with her for several days, but without making any impression. At last her confessor told her that "God and the Church required this sacrifice for the good of the country and in the interests of peace." She yielded, and the betrothal took place at once in the chapel of Notre Dame, just outside the gates of Rennes. The marriage between herself and Maximilian was declared illegal, on the ground that it had been contracted without the consent of her suzerain, Charles, and at the same time a dispensation was obtained to annul the infant marriage between Charles and Maximilian's daughter Margaret.

At last one winter morning, accompanied by a small party of her followers, Anne set forth to ride to Langeais, then a royal fortress, a distance of about a hundred and twenty miles from Rennes as the crow flies. At Langeais she found Charles awaiting her, and the marriage took place at once in the church of the château, December, 1491, the bride being attired for the ceremony in a gown of cloth-of-gold trimmed with one hundred and sixty sable skins, and costing 126,000 francs in modern money.

Among the witnesses, none, we may be sure, took a more lively interest in this marriage than the Duke of Orléans. He

had always been fond of the little Breton Princess, who, as a child at her father's court, had been wont to amuse him with her precocity and quaint ways. Seven years before, when she was still hardly more than an infant, a marriage contract had even been drawn up between them, but at that time Louis had been unable to get a divorce from his cousin, Jeanne of France. Now, however, a special clause in the contract provided that should Charles die leaving no son his widow was to marry his successor. This could only be Louis himself, who was a great-grandson of Charles V and heir presumptive to the throne.

The bride, we are told, had dark eyes, pencilled eyebrows, a broad forehead, finely modelled nose—slightly retroussé—round, pink cheeks, a curved mouth, and dark hair falling over her shoulders. The description of the bridegroom sounds less alluring. Though he was only twenty-one, it might be that of an old man. He is said to have had a bad complexion, a long, hooked nose, protruding under lip, scanty beard, and one side of his face different from the other.

There are to be seen to-day in the Great Hall at Langeais three very interesting portraits; they are two paintings of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII, framed together; and a bust of Charles VIII, which, it must be admitted, fully justifies the above description.

Shortly after the marriage ceremony the Queen was crowned at St. Denis, a touching little figure robed all in white damask. Louis of Orléans held the crown of France above the girlish head, with its plaits of dark hair falling over the shoulders, too slight and frail itself to support the weight.

By this marriage the duchy of Brittany, the last of the great feudal provinces to preserve its independence, became absorbed into the French kingdom. This achievement was the final

triumph of the government of Anne de Beaujeu, who had been Regent during her brother's nonage.[1] After his marriage Charles took the direction of affairs into his own hands.

The foundations of the Church of St. Sauveur, where the marriage of Anne and Charles probably took place, are in the park of the château. The church was founded early in the XIIth century by Fulk the Young, great-grandson of Fulk Nerra. While on the First Crusade he married Milicent, daughter of Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, and he brought back with him from the Holy Land some fragments of the Holy Sepulchre and of the "Cradle of the Saviour." It was to provide a worthy shrine for these relics that he built the church of the château of Langeais, then a part of his domains.

Near the remains of the church is Fulk Nerra's keep, a mere ruin, part of whose walls have crumbled wholly away, while the rest seem only to be held in place by the supporting arms of the ivy that creeps and climbs and enfolds them in a strong embrace.

One of Rabelais's patrons, whom he followed to Italy and then back again to Touraine, was Du Bellay, Sieur de Langeais, and a Renaissance house that faces the château from across the narrow street is pointed out as having been occupied by the jovial doctor up to the time of his patron's death in 1543.

At the time of the Revolution Langeais belonged to the Duke of Luynes; it was confiscated and in the early part of the XIXth century served as a municipal prison. Finally, after many vicissitudes, it was bought by its present owner, M. Sieg-

[1] In 1488, Maximilian of Austria, Alain d'Albret, and the Duke of Orléans had allied themselves with the English in an effort to overthrow the Beaujeu government. The attempt failed, and a number of French nobles and prelates who had joined the plot were thrown into prison, the Duke of Orléans among them. It was then that Philip de Commines "tasted the cage at Loches."


PATISSERIE
BOULANGERIE



CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS, DRAWBRIDGE

fried, who has restored it and presented it to the Institut de France,[1] though reserving the right to occupy it during his own lifetime.

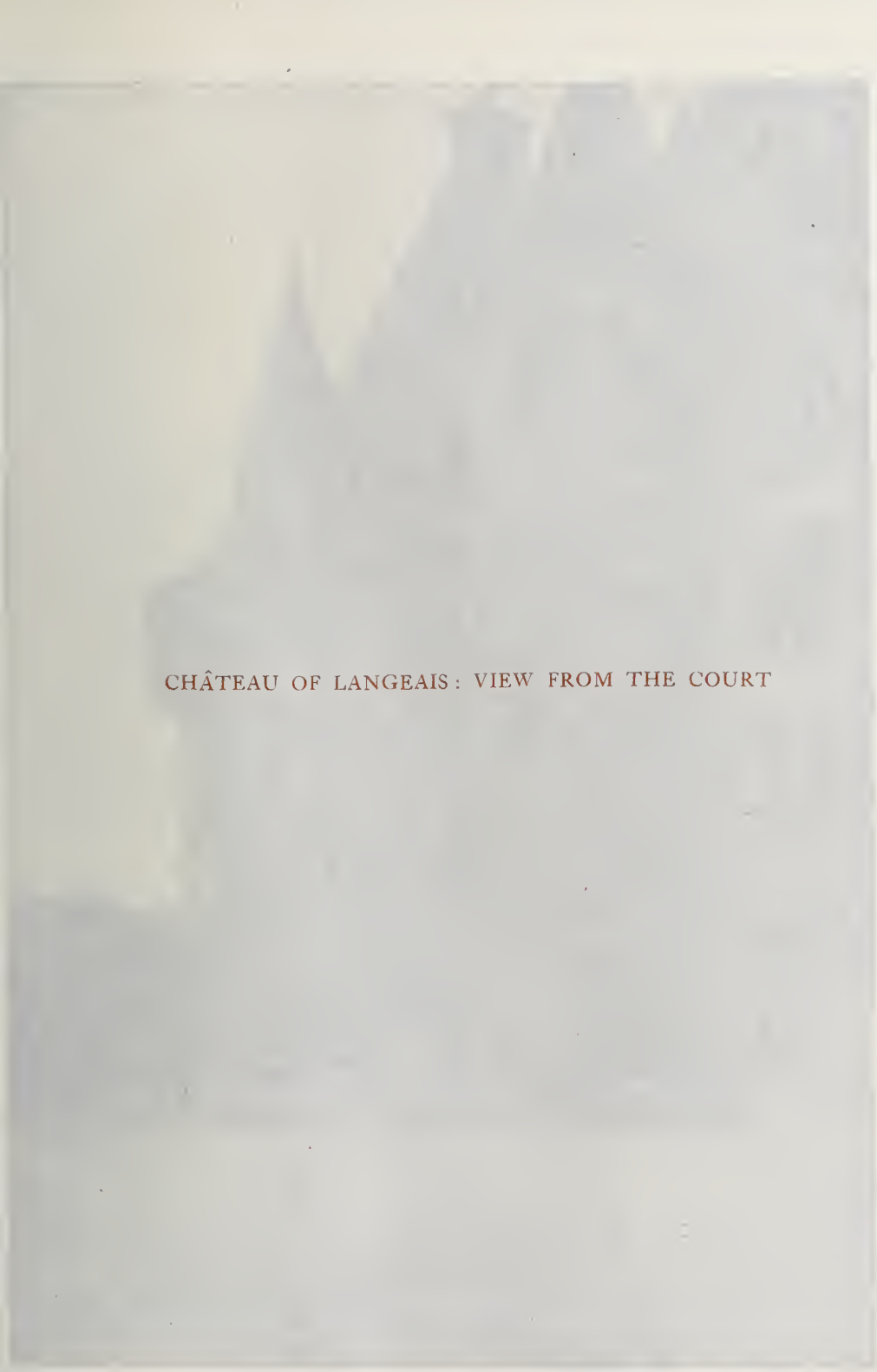
From the street, now on a level with what was the line of the moat, you mount a flight of stone steps to the drawbridge. Beyond this an archway leads to the wide, sunny court, nearly surrounded on three sides by buildings, but stretching up and away on the fourth to the park, where the remains of Fulk Nerra's keep are seen. The upper level of the court is covered by a square parterre, planted in a stiff pattern like a rug. Four towers, each with a spiral stair, lead to the different parts of the building.

The two most interesting rooms at Langeais are the Guard room and the Grand'Salle. The former has a monumental chimney-piece and a frieze in which the arms of Anne of Brittany, the leashed greyhounds and the ermine, appear, and her device—*potius mori quam fœdari* (better to die than to be tarnished). The decorations, also modern, of the adjoining room have the letters A K introduced, for Anne and Karolus (Charles VIII), with their devices and the two crowns joined by cordeliers.

An official of the Institut de France conducts the visitor over the castle, through what appears to be an interminable succession of richly-tiled floors, of tapestry-covered walls, of antiquely furnished apartments. Passing suddenly from the palpitating heat of the summer day into these cool, shaded rooms, filled with the odor of roses, of old books, of old tapestry, of old furniture, a sort of somnolence settles down upon you.

[1] The Institut de France is at Paris. It includes the Académie Française and the four Académies des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, des Sciences, des Beaux-Arts, et des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

Here are Flemish cabinets, Italian tapestries, Dutch wood-carvings, Spanish leather-work; everything of the "epoch." "These bedsteads were designed by Viollet-le-Duc." "Observe that the curtain is knotted about the right-hand post at the foot after the manner of the time." Rich and handsome and imposing as all this restoration is, yet one feels that for pure enjoyment it is better after all to be left in peace to idealize the reconstructing for oneself, as amidst the ruins of Chinon or even the scanty remains of Plessis-les-Tours.



CHÂTEAU OF LANGEAIS: VIEW FROM THE COURT



AMBOISE

CHAPTER VII

AMBOISE

THE brief reign and untoward death of Charles VIII, the story of whose marriage to Anne, Duchess of Brittany, at Langeais was told in the last chapter, are both closely associated with the château of Amboise.

This château, perched upon a wedge-shaped rock on the left bank of the Loire, is thought like so many others to be of Roman origin; there is a tradition that it was rebuilt as early as 375. However this may be, Clovis took it from the Visigoths early in the VIth century and his descendants held it for more than three hundred years. Then Louis the Stammerer gave it to Ingelger, father of the first Count of Anjou, as a reward for his valor in repulsing the Normans. From the Counts of Anjou, Amboise passed to one Hugh, a baron who had accompanied William the Conqueror to England and had won great wealth in the expedition. Hugh is described as "the stem of that illustrious house of Amboise which won such renown for itself as to be called the race of Mars." Nevertheless, Louis d'Amboise, its representative in Charles VII's reign, having joined in a plot against the favorite, Georges de la Tremoïlle, in 1431, lost all his property and nearly lost his head as well. The château was sequestered, and thenceforth belonged either

to the crown or to the Orléans family until 1762, when it was given to the Duke of Choiseul in exchange for his estate of Pompadour.

The visitor to Amboise after leaving the station and passing through the uninteresting modern town, emerges upon a broad quay, close to the XVth century church of Notre Dame du Bout-des-Ponts. This building is so plain as to be almost barn-like, but the interior, wide, low and without either aisles or choir, has a quaint and musty charm of its own. Outside, beside the door, the heights of some of the great floods of the Loire have been marked on the stone. Quite astounding they seem in view of the size of that tranquil stream as one sees it in midsummer.

At this point the bed of the Loire is so wide as to be spanned by two bridges thrown out from an island in the centre of the stream, the Ile d'Or, or, as it is now called from a XIIIth century church, the Ile St. Jean.

From the second bridge, after the island is passed, there is an unimpeded view of the opposite shore. Above the river and wide stretch of yellow sands lie, first the line of solid stone quays. Above the quays is a fringe of gay little houses and cafés, with gardens and vine-embowered balconies, where people sit and sip their coffee and watch the river and the women beating clothes in the water, and the peasants and donkeys and automobiles and soldiers and priests and tourists as they pass back and forward across the bridges. Above the houses comes a mighty mass of rock and solid masonry and buttressed wall, and over these, the château, light, smiling and habitable-seeming, with peaked roof and carved windows, tall chimneys and pointed tourelles, looking almost out of place on so grim and massive a base.



From the bridge you are facing the broad end of the triangular-shaped height on which the castle stands. On the extreme left is the park, indicated by a dark mass of foliage and supported on heavy, bastioned walls terminating in the huge round Tour des Minimes, whose base plunges down to the level of the house below.[1] Connected with the Tour des Minimes by a lofty spiral-stair tower is the principal façade, built by Charles VIII and called the *logis du Roi.* It has a graceful arcaded gallery surmounted on the main floor by a line of tall windows opening on a wrought-iron balcony of XVIIth century workmanship and known as the "Huguenot Balcony." Above is the steep roof added by Francis I, broken by six Renaissance dormer windows and a number of high brick chimneys. This part of the château has been thoroughly restored by members of the Orléans family, the present proprietors.

Formerly a line of buildings extended on the south to where a great round buttress marks the angle of the rock, and thence in an easterly direction, past the chapel of St. Hubert, to the other round tower, called the Tour César, or Heurtault. Now, however, all these intervening buildings have disappeared, leaving the little flamboyant chapel quite disengaged, and poised upon its solitary pier like some winged thing about to take flight. The rest of the space is laid out in terraces and gardens.

The château is reached by a vaulted passageway cut through the oldest part of the pile, the remains of the feudal fortress of the Counts of Anjou, upon the ruins of which the present

[1] So called from the near-by Minimes convent founded by Charles VIII, on the spot where he went on foot to receive Saint Francis de Paul on the latter's arrival in France. (see p. 47). In the convent grounds are a series of subterranean store-rooms for wine and grain, popularly known as "Cæsar's Granaries." Their date and origin have never been ascertained.

building stands. About half-way up the ascent you pass the stables, dating only from Louis Philippe's time, and at the top you emerge close to the chapel of St. Hubert. This exquisite little building was completed before Charles VIII, going down into Italy to conquer a kingdom, opened the way for a counter invasion by Italian craftsmen into France. It is, therefore, wholly French, both in design and workmanship. The bas-relief over the door, representing scenes from the life of Saint Hubert, belongs to the Tourangeau school of Michael Colombe. Above it is an admirable modern group of the Virgin and Child, between the kneeling figures of Charles VIII and Anne of Brittany, placed there when the Duke of Orléans restored the chapel in the XIXth century. The interior is extraordinarily rich, the surface of the stone being covered with a delicate fret-work of carving, representing branches of trees, vines, roots, gnarled and twisted trunks, leaves and twigs, everything, in short, that can suggest the forest glades in which Saint Hubert, the patron saint of huntsmen, made his home. The windows are filled with modern stained glass, too gaudy for the surroundings.

In this chapel are interred what are believed to be the bones of Leonardo da Vinci, placed there in 1879. In 1516, after the taking of Milan, King Francis I brought Leonardo da Vinci back with him to France, and established him in a house called Clos-Lucé, still standing on the south side of the town of Amboise. Here on 2d May, 1519, he died, leaving but few traces of his sojourn on French soil.[1] They buried him, according to his own wish, in the cloister of the ancient church

[1] While at Clos-Lucé Leonardo made designs for a reconstruction of the château of Amboise, which were never carried out, as well as some engineering plans and a hydrographic map of the Loire. Mr. T. A. Cook thinks he also painted there the St. John Baptist of the Louvre gallery. See "Spirals in Nature and Art," Theodore Andrea Cook.

of the château, dedicated to Saint Florentin by Fulk Nerra, Count of Anjou. During the Revolution this church was sold as national property and destroyed, no one at that time giving a thought to the tomb of the great Italian. A half-century went by, then it occurred to someone that an effort should be made to recover his bones. In 1863, accordingly, M. Arsène Houssaye, Inspector of the Fine Arts at Paris, was authorized to excavate the site. He found what he believed to be the remains he was in search of, and, though no positive identification was possible, these were re-interred in the chapel of St. Hubert. The French Government placed a memorial bust on the site of the original tomb with the dates 1452-1519.

During the Hundred Years War, and up to the time of Charles VII's death, Amboise served mainly as a royal fortress.[1] Louis XI partly rebuilt it as a residence for his Queen, Charlotte of Savoy, and there the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII, was born on 30th June, 1470. He was a delicate child and Louis fussed over him like an old woman. The townspeople were ordered to discontinue their custom of attending service in the church of the château for fear of introducing infectious diseases, and were told to build a church for themselves in the town below. They did so, the existing church of Notre Dame. On the other hand, the King organized a sort of civic guard for the better protection of the castle in times of disturbance. "Betake yourselves to the castle," he writes to the burghers, "whenever there is need, with your spoons and your sauce-pans and drink wine from my cellars, but see that you surrender it to no one but myself."

For eight years after Louis XI's death his son Charles con-

[1] Although Louis d'Amboise recovered the rest of his estates after the disgrace of La Tremoïlle, Amboise was especially excepted.

tinued to live quietly at Amboise, occupied with adding to the château, and with reading romances and filling his brain with dreams of chivalric enterprises; his masterful sister, the Regent, Anne de Beaujeu, meanwhile governed the kingdom. In 1491, however, soon after his marriage, Charles took the management of affairs into his own hands, and two years later all his romancing and novel-reading bore fruit. He determined that it would be a fine thing to ride forth and conquer the kingdom of Naples, to which the House of Valois had a nebulous claim.[1] The Queen, hard-headed little Bretonne that she was, thought the enterprise foolish and did her best to dissuade him, but Charles was very obstinate, and he had, moreover, set his heart upon seeing the famed palaces and gardens of the south with a view to further improvements at Amboise.

At this time, in addition to the chapel of St. Hubert, he had already completed the wing facing the Loire called the *logis du Roi* and some other buildings since destroyed, and had begun the two great towers of Minimes and Heurault. These towers were, and still are, unique in France. In construction they consist of two towers each, the inner ones forming the central columns of support for what ordinarily would be stairs, but which here are inclined planes. In the Tour Heurtault the rise is so gradual and the width of the plane so great, that horsemen and even carriages can mount it without difficulty, and it served as the main entrance to the château. The supports of this spiral plane are a series of pointed arches, their bases carved with grotesque figures, thrown from the central

[1] The royal families of Arragon and of France both laid claim to the crown of Naples, and in 1492 Ferdinand I of Arragon was in possession. The French lawyers made out a case for Charles VIII based (1) on the conquest of Naples by Charles of Anjou, brother of Saint Louis, and (2) on its having been left by will to Louis XI at the death of Charles du Maine, the last representative of the second French House of Anjou.





PORTAL OF CHAPEL OF ST. HUBERT

tower to the outer walls; a construction of enormous difficulty owing to the great weight, the oblique direction of the arches, and the varying width of the intervening spaces. The *logis du Roi* contains the summer and winter Guard rooms and the Salles des États from which opens the "Huguenot Balcony."

In the summer of 1494 Charles set forth on his great expedition very gallant and hopeful, and indeed the advance through Italy was nothing short of a succession of triumphs. At Milan the new Duke, Ludovico the Moor, made a treaty with the French King; at Florence Pierro de Médicis did the same, though Savonarola remonstrated and tried hard to arouse the people to resist it; and at Rome the Pope, Alexander VI, was equally affable; finally, when the army reached Naples in February the ruling House of Arragon was driven out and the capital occupied almost without fighting.[1] Charles remained there three months busily employed in collecting books, statues, furniture and tapestries, and in visiting the palaces and gardens. "You would not believe," he writes to Pierre de Bourbon, "how beautiful the gardens are in this town. On my faith, it seems as though nothing were needed but the presence of Adam and Eve to turn it into a veritable earthly paradise!"

In May the French army set out on the return march, but this was nearly as disastrous as the advance had been fortunate. By October, when they regained their own country, nearly every advantage won in Italy had been lost. The Venetian troops, moreover, had captured the baggage wagons containing all the King's rich collections; but far more serious than any of these misfortunes, the Dauphin, described by Gentile Becchi,

[1] Ferdinand I of Arragon had died the year before. His successor, Alfonso, abdicated in favor of his son, Ferdinand II, at the moment when the French were before the walls of Naples.

the Florentine Ambassador, as a *bel enfant, le joyau du royaume,* had died. The King and Queen shut themselves up at Amboise and brooded so heavily over their loss that the courtiers organized a fête in order to divert their minds. Unfortunately the Duke of Orléans, whom the Dauphin's death had made heir presumptive to the throne, entered too heartily into the spirit of the occasion, and danced and skipped about so joyously that the Queen's feelings were outraged. She reproached him angrily for his conduct and for some months he was obliged to absent himself from court. Hardly more than two years later Charles himself died at Amboise under distressing circumstances. "The eight day of Aprill," writes Philippe de Commines,[1] "the yere 1498, upon Palm Sunday even, the King being in this glorie as touching the world, and in this good minde towards God: departed out of the chamber of Queene Anne, Duches of Britaine, his wife, leading her with him to see the tennice plaiers in the trenches of the castle, whither he had never led her before, and they two entred togither into a gallerie, called Haquelebac's gallerie, because the said Haquelebac had in times past held watch and ward in it. It was the uncleanest place about the castle, and the entrie into it was broken downe: moreover, the King, as he entred, knocked his browe against the doors; notwithstanding that he were of verie small stature. Afterward he beheld a great while the tennice playing, talking familiarly with all men. My selfe was not present there, but his confessor, the Bishop of Angers, and those of his chamber that were neerest about him, have enformed me of this I write: for as touching my selfe, I was gone home eight daies before to my house. The last word that he spake being in health was, that he hoped never after to commit deadly sin nor veniall if

[1] Danett's Commines. The Tudor Translations, XVIII.



CHAPEL OF ST. HUBERT AND TOUR HEURTAULT


205. Château d'Amboise. — La Chapelle et la Tour de Ces
ND

he could: in uttering the which words he fell backward and lost his speech, about two of the clocke at after noone, and abode in this gallerie till eleven of the clocke at night. Thrise he recovered his speech, but it continued not with him, as the said confessor told me, who had shriven him twise that weeke, once of ordinarie, and once for those that came to be cured of the King's evill. Every man that listed entred into the gallerie, where he lay upon an olde mattresse of strawe, from the which he never arose till he gave up the ghost, so that nine howers he continued upon it. The saide confessor, who was continually by him, told me that all the three times he recovered his speech he cried: My God, and the glorious Virgin Marie, Saint Claude, and Saint Blase, help me. Thus departed out of this world this mightie puissant Prince in this miserable place, not being able to recover one poore chamber to die in: notwithstanding he had so many goodly houses, and built one so sumptuous at that present."[1]

A little door at the end of a terrace at Amboise is erroneously pointed out as the one against which King Charles struck his head on that fatal Palm Sunday. The Haquelebac gallery and the door leading to it were both destroyed in the last century, and this door, which is surmounted by the porcupine of Louis XII, dates only from that monarch's time.

As soon as the elaborate funeral ceremonies were over the new King, Louis XII, prepared to carry out the provisions of the marriage contract of Langeais.[2] In the month of August hearings were begun before an ecclesiastical court with the object of annulling the marriage contracted twenty-two years before between the King and Princess Jeanne of France. The

[1] The account-books of Amboise show that King Charles had spent 5,700 *livres* on the furnishings alone of the beds in the château, of which there were at that time forty-five.

[2] See p. 161.

proceedings dragged on for four months and the unfortunate Princess, although subjected to the most humiliating questions, was the only person concerned to emerge from the affair with credit. She constantly affirmed and with great dignity and simplicity that there was no cause for which she could legally be repudiated, but in spite of her protestations the marriage was declared void. The Queen went into a dignified retirement at Bourges and devoted herself to good works, but from the people she got justice. "There goes Caiaphas!" they would cry after the ecclesiastics who composed the court, "There goes Herod! There goes Pilate! The false judges who said that that high-born lady is not the true Queen of France!"

These things made the project of Louis's re-marriage with herself very distasteful to Anne of Brittany. At first she flatly refused, declaring that "all the decrees in the world would never make anything of her but the King's concubine!" but she soon gave in, and on 8th January, 1499, less than nine months after King Charles's death, she and Louis were married at Nantes. They spent the rest of the winter travelling about in Brittany and France, and in April were to make their state entry into Amboise. The town outdid itself in the preparation of triumphal arches, garlands, and processions; the entire space between the château and the river was converted into a covered pavilion, in the centre of which rose two columns supporting, respectively, an ermine and a porcupine, from whose mouths flowed streams of wine; and canopies covered with red and white damask were erected for the King and Queen. The latter alone, however, appeared to take part in the ceremony, and the absence of the King has been oddly attributed to *une attention delicate,* a dread on his part of arousing painful memories in his wife's mind by appearing at that place by her side.

Louis XII added a wing to the château of Amboise, the one still standing at right angles with the *logis du Roi.* In it are seen his own and the Queen's apartments, all now very beautifully restored. The King also made some improvements in the gardens, already under his predecessor, famed for their beauty. There is a tradition that the first orange-trees seen in France were planted there by Charles VIII's Italian landscape-gardener, Passelo da Mercogliano.

Usually, however, Louis XII preferred the old château of the Orléans family at Blois, where he was born, and in 1518 Amboise was assigned as the residence of Louise of Savoy and of her son, Francis, Prince of Angoulême, afterwards Francis I, who was then heir presumptive to the throne and betrothed to Claude of France, the elder of the two daughters of King Louis and Anne of Brittany. Although this Prince did some building at Amboise, he was chiefly occupied after his accession with his great constructions at Blois, at Chambord and at Fontainebleau. It was, however, at Amboise that he magnificently entertained Charles V when the Emperor passed through France in 1539. The great Heurtault tower was hung on that occasion with tapestries from foot to summit and lighted by so many torches that it was *aussi clair qu'en un compagne en pleine midy,* as the old account puts it.

In Henry II's time the court still came occasionally to Amboise, and Diane of Poitiers bought ground there adjoining the royal gardens and had plans drawn up for *une maison, jardins, vergers et aultres choses,* which she proposed to construct, but never did. During the Religious Wars the fortifications of the château were strengthened and the place assumed more and more the character of a stronghold to which the royal family might retire in times of disturbance. It is

in this phase that we find it becoming in the second half of the XVIth century the scene of one of the most tragic events of that stormy period.

On the accession of Francis II, at the age of fifteen, his wife's two uncles, Francis, Duke of Guise, and Cardinal Lorraine, got complete control of the government, to the great dissatisfaction not only of the Protestant party, but of the Queen-mother and of the rival House of Bourbon. Early in the year 1560 a plot was formed to break down the power of the Guises. The château of Blois, where the court was assembled, was to be seized, the Duke and the Cardinal were to be made prisoners and impeached before the States-General, and Anthony de Bourbon, King of Navarre, and his brother, the Prince of Condé, were to be placed at the head of affairs. Although the conspiracy was actually directed by Condé, the nominal leader was an obscure personage, named La Renaudie, who had been condemned some time previously for forgery, and had fled to Geneva, where he had been converted to Protestantism. Recruits on being enrolled were required to take an oath of allegiance to "the silent Captain," by whom Condé was understood to be meant, but his name was never used.

Towards the end of February, when plans to surprise Blois were nearly completed the conspirators were thrown into sudden confusion by the unexpected departure of the court for Amboise. Everything had to be changed, and, moreover, just at this juncture the Guises got their first intimation of the plot. Arrived at Amboise, they instantly took measures for their own safety. The gate leading into the town was walled up; the castle guards were replaced by partisans of their own; squads of cavalry patrolled the neighboring highroads, and the royal garrisons at Orléans, Bourges, Tours and Angers were put





TOUR MINIMES AND WING OF LOUIS XII, AMBOISE

under the command of captains upon whom the Duke could absolutely rely. From time to time further details of the plot leaked out, all tending to show that the person of the King was not in the smallest danger, and that the Guises alone were the object of attack. This being perfectly understood, the court bore the two ministers a hearty grudge for the confinement and restriction to which all were subjected merely to provide for their safety.

The conspirators, meanwhile, had established their headquarters at a neighboring château called Noizay, from whence orders for the attack on the castle were to be issued. Before the appointed day, however, this place was surprised by a party of royal troops, and the garrison was captured *en masse*. After this check everything went wrong. Condé, who arrived at Court on the very day of the disaster, instantly abandoned the cause and thenceforth thought only of how to put the best face upon the affair, while his deluded followers continued to plot and plan, still counting upon his help.

The arrangement was to surprise the castle on the night of the 16th March, and the main body of the Protestants was to come from Blois in time to lead the attack. Unfortunately they mistook the road and only arrived at daybreak, the Guises meanwhile having been fully informed of their approach. The attempt was an utter failure; not a single one of all the sympathizers upon whose coöperation from within the château they had counted was left, and after the first repulse the attacking party fled in disorder. Parties of cavalry were sent to chase the discomfited Protestants and returned to the château bringing in their prisoners in batches. So harmless did these appear that for a time the Guises talked of a general pardon, but only for a time. As they realized that they had been de-

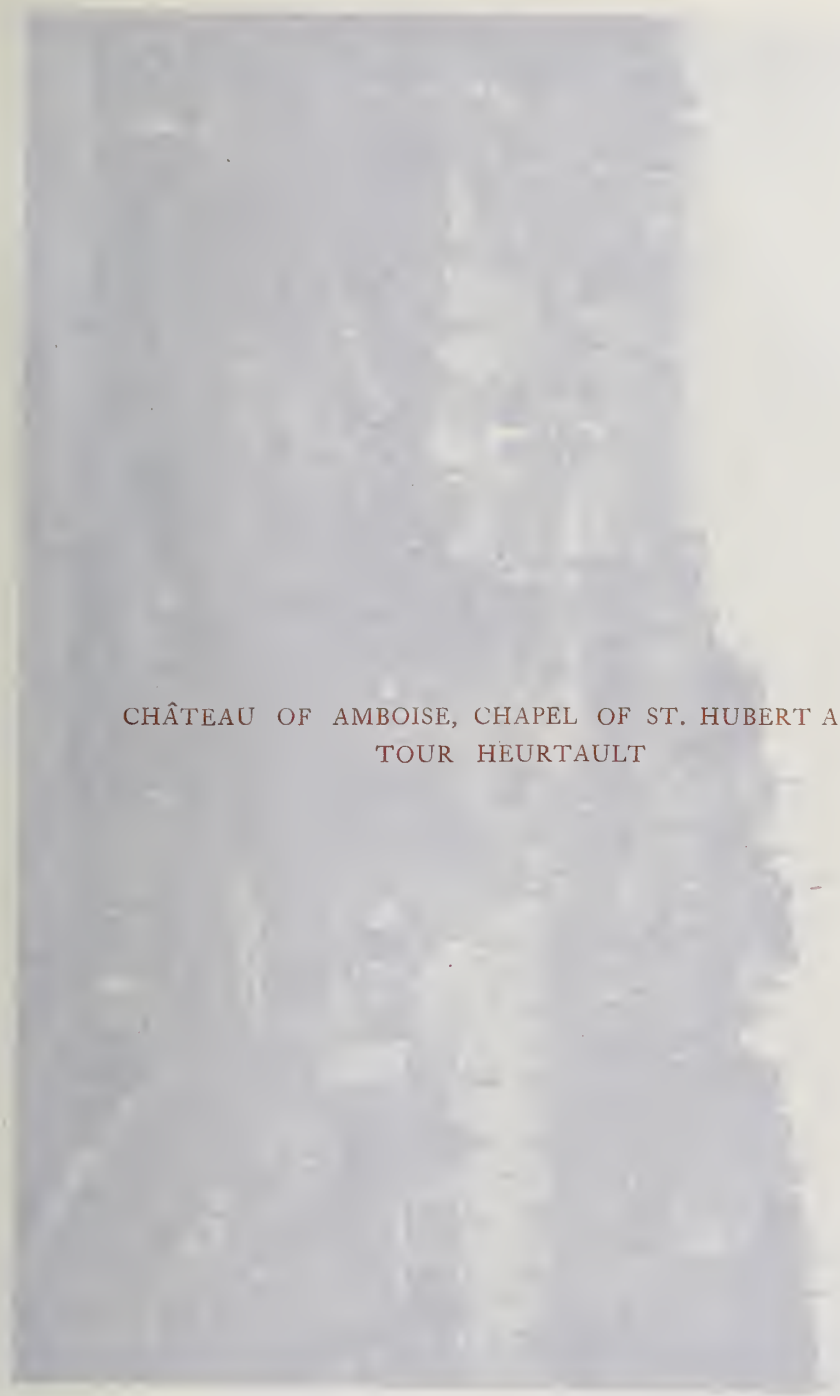
nounced throughout the country as enemies of the State they became furious. The Duke had himself named Lieutenant-general of the kingdom with unrestricted powers, and decrees were issued condemning all the leaders of the plot to death. La Renaudie had already been killed in a skirmish in the neighboring forest.

Before long the entire Protestant community became involved in an indiscriminate slaughter. Farmers, artisans, merchants, non-combatants of every degree, were seized by the soldiers in the fields and roads and woods, and either killed on the spot or dragged off to be hanged from improvised gibbets in the château, or else tied hand and foot and flung into the Loire. For the chiefs, a more dramatic ending was reserved.

Towards the end of March notices were read from the pulpits of the neighboring parish churches of an "act of faith" shortly to be accomplished at the château. As this was understood to mean nothing else than the execution of all the remaining prisoners the interest was widespread. On the eve of the appointed day people poured in in crowds from the surrounding country; thousands are said to have camped out all night on a nearby hilltop, while dormer windows and roofs commanding a view of the scaffold were leased for prices unheard of till that day.

Within the castle all was arranged as for a fête; seats were erected in tiers for the accommodation of the ladies and gentlemen of the court around the open space where the executions were to take place, while the wrought-iron balcony opening from the *logis du Roi* was reserved for the royal family and distinguished guests.

Immediately after dinner on 30th March the band of fifty-seven Protestant gentlemen was conducted to the foot of the



CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE, CHAPEL OF ST. HUBERT AND TOUR HEURTAULT

scaffold, chanting Clement Marot's metrical version of the LXVIth psalm:

> Dieu nous soit doux et favorable,
> Nous bénissant par sa bonté,
> Et de son visage adorable
> Nous fasse luire la clarté.

The Duke of Guise on horseback took his place close to the scaffold, the benches were filled with groups of chattering and expectant courtiers, and above, the reluctant King, who would fain have stayed away, but was afraid to, took his seat upon the balcony between his young Queen, Mary Stuart, and his mother, Catherine de Médicis. With them were Cardinal Lorraine, the Papal Nuncio, and the Duke of Orléans. Just as the signal to begin was about to be given, Condé stepped through the window and took his place beside the Queen. At the sight of their "silent Captain" the group at the foot of the scaffold with one accord saluted, and Condé gravely returned the salute. Then the first name was called and the first head was laid upon the block, followed by another and still another, the sound of the chanting growing ever fainter and fainter, until at last one voice alone, that of the Baron of Castelnau-Chalosse, was heard:

> Dieu nous soit doux et favorable . . .

The executioner raised his axe, the Cardinal gave the signal, and the last head fell.

The Court by this time was thoroughly surfeited, while the young King was barely able to sit the spectacle out. To be "rid of the blood," therefore they all took horse on the following day and rode off to Chenonceaux, where the Queen-mother soon made them forget everything in a series of festivities.

The country, however, did not forget, and one result of the butcheries at Amboise was to plunge France into thirty-five years of civil war, lightened, it may be, though for only a brief period, by the "Edict of Amboise," published three years later, when the Queen-mother was forced to grant liberty to the Huguenots for the free exercise of their religion except in certain towns and districts.

The château was never again very popular as a dwelling-place. Richelieu turned it into a state prison and sent César, Duke of Vendôme, and his brother, the Grand Prior, there after the discovery of the Chalais conspiracy.[1]

Fouquet, the disgraced minister of Louis XIV, was also imprisoned at Amboise, and in 1663 La Fontaine, his ardent admirer, made a sort of passionate pilgrimage thither to view the scene of his friend's sufferings:

"They have walled up the windows of his room," he wrote to his wife, "and I could not get in, as the soldier who took me around had no key. All I could do was to stand in front of the door and try to picture it for myself:

Chambre murée, étroite place,
Quelque peu d'air pour toute grace,
Jours sans soleil,
Nuits sans sommeil,
Trois portes en six pieds d'espace!

If night had not fallen they would never have dragged me from the spot!"

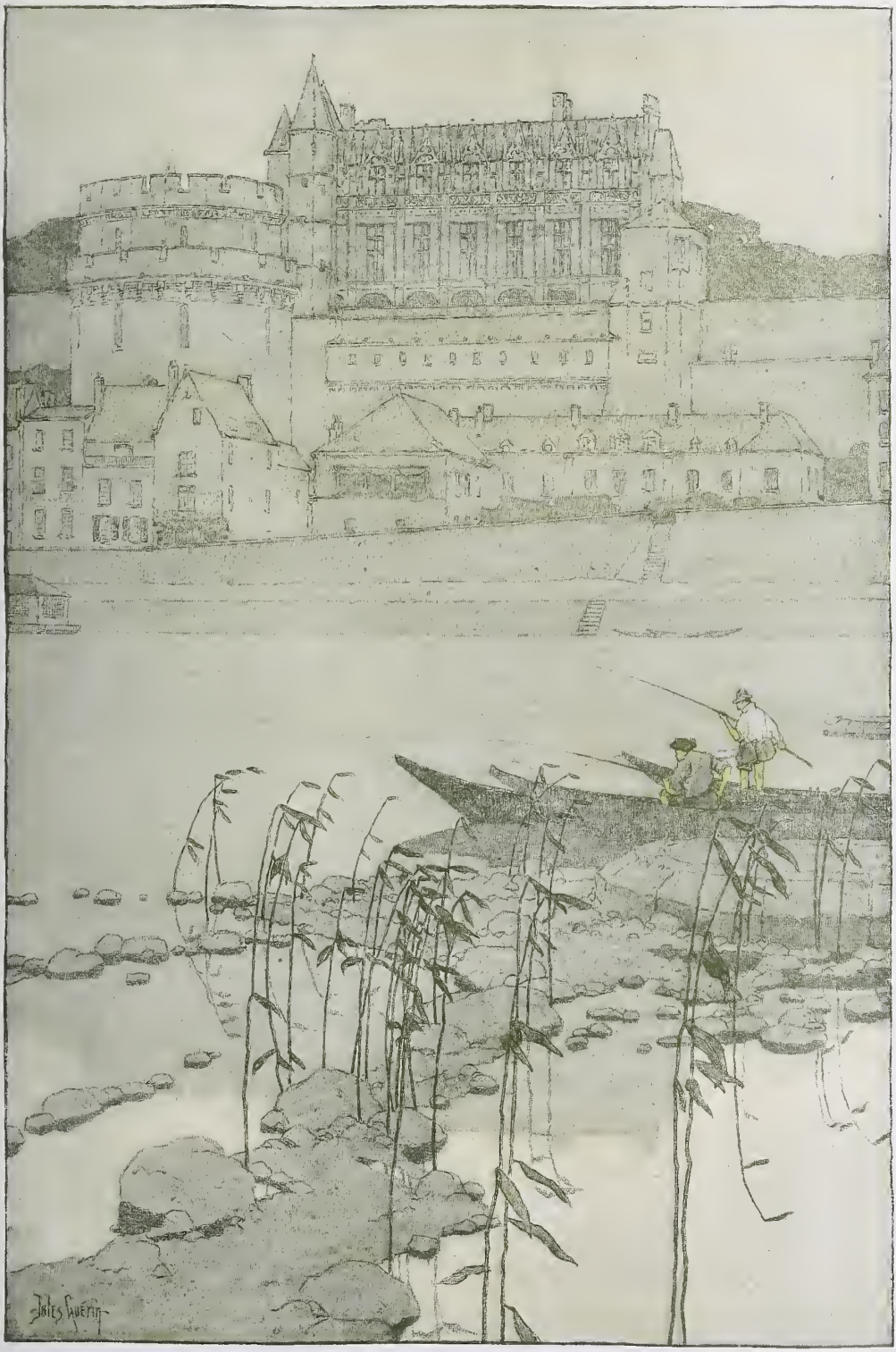
Although subsequently used occasionally as a state prison, Amboise has for the most part been the property of the Orléans family since the beginning of the XVIIth century, when it was given to Gaston of Orléans.[2] At the Revolution it was

[1] See page 286.

[2] Before the Revolution it belonged for a short time to the Duke of Choiseul.



CHÂTEAU OF AMBOISE: VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE OVER THE LOIRE


Jules Laverne

taken from the Duchess of Orléans and later given by Napoleon to his former colleague, the Consul Roger Ducos, by whom it was terribly maltreated. Either because he found them too costly to maintain or out of pure love of destruction, Ducos pulled down a number of the buildings outright, established a manufactory in one wing, and covered the beautiful carvings and reliefs of the age of Charles VIII and Louis XII with thick coats of plaster.

At the Restoration in 1814 the château of Amboise returned to the family of Orléans, of whom Louis Philippe, elected to the throne on the fall of the Bourbons sixteen years later, was then the head. Louis Philippe's government and the French monarchy ended simultaneously in the Revolution of 1848, and just prior to that event Amboise received its last distinguished prisoner, the Emir Abd-el-Kader. This young Arab chief had been conducting a Holy War in Morocco with the object of driving the French out of Algeria. In December, 1847, finding his cause hopeless, he surrendered to the Duke of Aumale, Louis Philippe's second son, on the understanding that he would not be sent anywhere but to Syria or to Egypt. The home Government, however, refused to keep to this agreement, and the Emir was taken to France and confined in the château of Amboise until the autumn of 1852, when Louis Napoleon, then President of the Second Republic, restored him to liberty. Twenty years later, by Act of the National Assembly, Amboise was given back to the Orléans family, and to them it has ever since belonged.

BLOIS



ENTRANCE TO THE CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS (FAÇADE OF LOUIS XII)

CHAPTER VIII

BLOIS

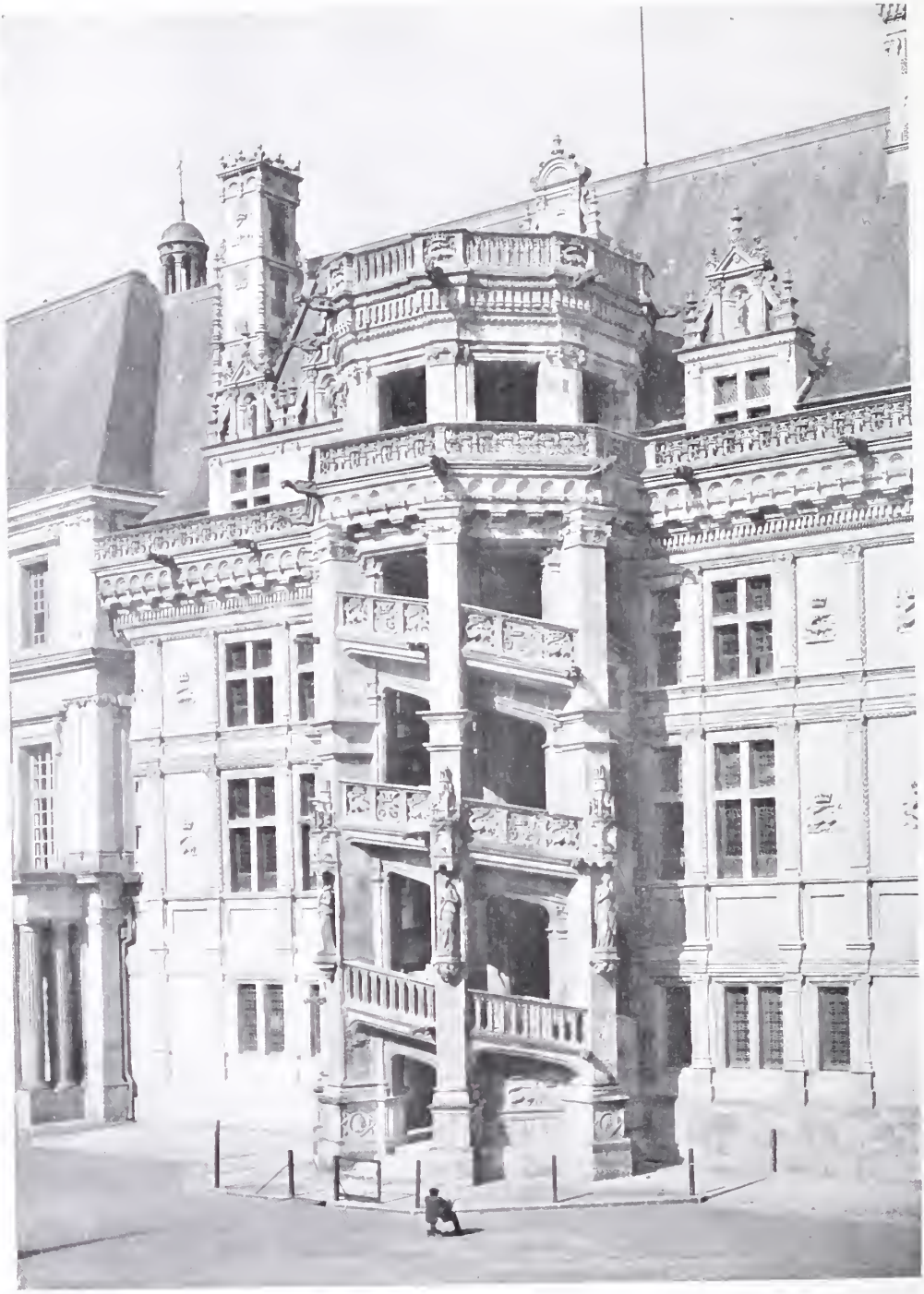
ALTHOUGH he added an imposing wing to the palace of Amboise, Louis XII usually preferred to hold his court at Blois. This domain came to the Orléans family about the close of the XIVth century, when Louis, Duke of Orléans, brother of King Charles VI and grandfather of Louis XII, obtained from the crown the county of Blois in addition to his already extensive possessions.

Originally the triangular-shaped plateau upon which the château stands held a Roman fortress. This was twice rebuilt, first about the middle of the Xth century by Thibaud the Cheat, ancestor of the early Counts of Blois, and again in the XIIIth century by one of his descendants, but, with the exception of the so-called "Salle des États" and a part of the round Tour du Moulin, none of these early buildings remain. The position was formerly far stronger, for the steep sides of the plateau, washed by the waters of the Loire and of the Arroux—since dried up—on the south, east and north, and by those of a huge moat on the west, were further protected by a massive wall of defence. Some remains of the towers that guarded this wall can still be seen embedded in the neighboring buildings of the town.

The first Orléans Count of Blois possessed all those traits which for several generations seem to have characterized the Dukes of Orléans. A delicate, volatile creature, with much personal charm. A lover of music and of poetry, a gambler and voluptuary, extravagant, luxurious, ambitious.

Early in the reign of his brother, Charles VI, a rivalry broke out between him and his powerful uncle, Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy. As the King's attacks of madness became more frequent this jealously between the heads of the two great houses increased, and the Queen, Isabelle of Bavaria, utterly without principle herself, played them off the one against the other.

Philippe le Hardi died in 1404, and for a time his successor, Jean sans Peur, was too much taken up with affairs in Burgundy to frequent the Court; but before long there was trouble brewing between the cousins. In the autumn of 1407 they were both in Paris, where the Court was assembled. The Queen had just given birth to her twelfth child, and, on the evening of 23d November, the Duke of Orléans went to pay his respects to her at the Hôtel Barbette in the Marais quarter of Paris. At about eight o'clock he took his leave, and, mounting his mule, started to ride home accompanied only by eight or ten followers and by two or three torch-bearers, who led the way. The Duke was bare-headed; as he rode along he flapped one glove in the air and gaily hummed a tune. The escort had lagged behind, when suddenly a cry was heard of "Murder!" followed by a fleeting glimpse of a kneeling figure in the middle of the street, set upon by an armed band. Then the torches were extinguished and all was silent save for a few groans and the noise of rapidly retreating footsteps. Lights were brought from a neighboring house and a young German esquire was





GRAND STAIRCASE OF FRANCIS I

found lying mortally wounded, and near him the body of the Duke of Orléans.[1]

Two days later Jean sans Peur admitted that "at the instigation of the Devil" he had ordered the murder. Then he quitted Paris. The King, who was very fond of his brother and who was outraged at the boldness of the crime, issued letters excluding the Duke of Burgundy from the Government in case of a Regency, but after that nothing more was done. The beautiful widowed Duchess, Valentine Visconti, after pleading in vain for justice, was fain to retire with her grief and her bitter sense of injury to Blois, taking with her the young Duke, Charles, but sixteen years old, and his wife, Isabelle of France, widow of King Richard II of England.

The murdered Duke had made some additions to the château, but for thirty years and more after his death the family was in no condition to be occupied with such matters. In 1408 Valentine Visconti died, followed shortly by the Princess Isabelle. Duke Charles, the Poet-Prince, then strengthened his party and gave it a name by marrying the daughter of Bernard VII of Armagnac, but in 1415 he was taken prisoner at Azincourt and carried off to a twenty-five years' captivity in England.

One of Henry V's death-bed injunctions was to keep the then childless Duke of Orléans a close prisoner, so that he might have no son to contest England's claim to the French throne. Nevertheless, in 1440 the Duke was ransomed for an enormous sum, and being again a widower, he sealed the reconciliation of his house with that of Burgundy by marrying Mary of Cleves, a niece of the reigning Duke, Philip the Good.

The Poet-Prince of Orléans took but little part in public

[1] See E. Lavisse, "Hist. de France," t. 4; p. 1; E. Coville.

affairs after his return to France. He passed his time mainly at Blois, writing verses and adding buildings to the château, and there in 1462 his only son, the future King Louis XII. was born.

The château as we see it to-day covers about one-half of the site of the ancient citadel. The other half is laid out in a shady square surrounded by buildings, among which is the XVth century hôtel of Cardinal Georges d'Amboise.[1] Across the west end of the square extends the wing of Louis XII, abutting on the right on the great XIIIth century Salle des États, or, to give it its proper name, the "Grand'Salle of the Counts of Blois."

"It is much to be regretted," says M. E. Le Nail, the author of a very complete account of the château of Blois, "that the modern name given to this room—the 'Salle des États'—should cause us to overlook its earlier and more characteristic history. The Grand'Salle of the palace of the Middle Ages was the place where the sovereign assembled his vassals on all the most solemn occasions. . . the scene of state entertainments and of important ceremonies, the witness of the entire public life of the great barons. A Frankish institution *par excellence,* its origins are lost in the beginnings of the very nation itself. . . . Besides that of Blois, the only existing Grand'Salles, properly so called, are those of Angers, XIth century; of Sens, XIIIth century; of Poitiers, XIIIth and XVth centuries; and of Narbonne, XIVth century."

The walls of the Grand'Salle of Blois, with some of the woodwork, and the row of columns that divide the interior, all belong to the original building.

The wing of Louis XII, built some time prior to 1502, is of small black and red bricks with facings and window-frames

[1] See p. 314.

of light stone. It has a steep slate roof broken by carved stone dormer windows, between which are a row of smaller dormers of gilded and painted wood. The ornamentation is extremely rich and varied, especially in the details of the main portal, which is surmounted by a gothic niche with a double canopy above an equestrian statue of Louis XII and flanked by carved columns running up to the roof. Everywhere are introduced the initials of Louis and of Anne of Brittany, the porcupine, the ermine and the cordelier. There is no attempt at symmetry in the two sides of the façade. The spacing, details of the ornamentation, even the size and shape of the windows, vary considerably; yet the effect of the whole is homogeneous and graceful in the extreme. The comparatively plain section on the right contained the kitchens and offices. On the west side of the wing facing the court is an arcade with twisted columns said to be copied from the one formerly seen at Plessis-les-Tours, built by Louis's father-in-law, Louis XI.

The plan of the château of Blois is an irregular quadrilateral. On the northwest is the Grand'Salle joined to Louis XII's wing on the east by a square stair-tower. On the south is the chapel of St. Calais, also built by Louis XII, on the site of a much earlier church and entered through a gallery supporting a small building which is all that is left of the XVth century additions of the murdered Duke of Orléans. On the north is the wing designed in the XVIIth century by Mansard for Gaston of Orléans, who, in order to erect it on this site, pulled down all the buildings of the Poet-Prince, Charles of Orléans. Finally, on the north extends the great wing built by Francis I, which occupies the site of the early feudal fortress, some of whose walls and towers are incorporated into it.

Seen amidst such surroundings Mansard's wing has a hopelessly chilling effect. It is in vain that the French writers call at-

tention to the monumental stairway—"assuredly one of the handsomest and most complete examples of its kind in existence," and to the dignity of the façade with its superimposed orders; nothing can efface the general impression of dreariness and of shabby neglect, and it is with relief that one turns to that long line of building of Francis I on the north, which may be said to represent almost the final expression of the true French Renaissance.

"This wing," says M. Le Nail, "is the most remarkable part of the château . . . . and is, in a sense, unique in France. On the north, the side overlooking the town, the three upper stories are arranged after the Roman order, then coming into vogue; but everywhere the French influence is still dominant. Before long, at Fontainebleau, this will wholly disappear, engulfed in the Italian style. At Blois, therefore, are seen the very last of those royal constructions upon which the beautiful and noble French school has set the stamp of its fertile genius."

On the south, the line of the building is broken by a carved spiral staircase of wonderful richness, extending out into the court. The name of the architect of this staircase, justly accounted one of the most exquisite productions of the Renaissance, has not been preserved, though it is known that from the year 1519 the buildings were directed by one Jacques Sourdeau, master of works in the county of Blois. Mr. T. A. Cook has, however, in his fascinating book, "Spirals in Nature and Art," elaborated a theory that this staircase was designed by Leonardo da Vinci during his sojourn in the neighboring town of Amboise,[1] and that he took for his model the shell *Voluta Vespertilio:*

"At Blois there is a staircase built . . . . just at a time

[1] See p. 176.

when Leonardo's presence in Touraine might have enabled him to suggest its plan, built with its external lines corresponding to the outside of a shell, while its internal spiral reproduces the helix on the columella of that shell. . . If, as I believe, this staircase was copied from a shell, the man who owned the shell and used it so must have been not merely an architect, but a master of construction, for the groin-work and vaulting of the stairs are not the least astounding part of the whole building; and he must have been a decorative artist, too, of the very highest order. Confining your attention for a moment to the inside of the staircase only, you will see ample evidence of this in several directions. The stairs wind upwards, folding round that exquisite central shaft as the petals of a flower fold one within the other; and in the very lines of each step itself a strange and beautiful look of life and growth is produced by the double curve on which it is so subtly planned; for these steps are not straight, as in the older staircase of the château, and most ordinary instances, but are carved into a sudden little wave of outline just where each one springs out from the supporting pillar—from the supporting stalk, as it were, of these delicately encircling leaves.

"It is the irresistible, spontaneous, uplifting movement of the whole that remains, after all, the main impression of this marvellous piece of work at Blois. To walk up those steps is to be borne along upon a breath of beauty, and not to feel the clogging feet of human clay at all. Those waving lines rush upwards like a flame blown strongly from beneath; for there is in them a touch of that spell which is elemental; of that same Nature's mystery which curves the tall shaft of the iris upwards from the pool in which it grows, or flings the wave in curving lines of foam upon the rocks the rising tide will cover."[1]

[1] See "Spirals in Nature and Art." Theodore Andrea Cook. John Murray, 1903.

The Court life of Blois began with the accession in 1498 of Louis XII. Whatever irregularities he may have committed in his youth, the life he led with his wife, Anne of Brittany, was sober and dignified and his relations with her were friendly and affectionate. He treated her little foibles with good-humored tolerance and allowed her to have far more voice in public affairs than she had enjoyed with her first husband, Charles VIII, gentle and easy-going as he was supposed to be.

The Queen early set her heart upon a marriage between the little Princess Claude of France and the Infant of Spain, son of the Archduke of Austria and afterwards the Emperor Charles V. Perhaps she had some idea in her mind of poetic justice, a healing of the double injury to Austria caused by her own marriage with Charles VIII.[1] Neither Louis nor his Ministers were much in favor of the marriage, but the Queen was allowed to have her way, and in 1502 the Archduke, Philip the Handsome, and his wife, the Infanta, came to Blois to complete the negotiations. Louis's additions to the château were but just finished and everything was arranged with great magnificence. In order further to dazzle her guests Anne had her own ancestral plate brought from Nantes and all refurbished and newly engraved with her arms.[2] She received the Archduchess seated upon a throne and advanced only two steps to meet her. The impression was somewhat marred, however, by the little Princess, who set up such piercing shrieks at the sight of her mother-in-law to be, that she had to be hurriedly taken away. As years went on and there seemed to be no prospect of an heir, King Louis, yielding to the wishes of his coun-

[1] See p. 160.

[2] The arms of the ducal house of Brittany; if the marriage took place, Brittany would pass to Austria as the portion of the bride.

sellors, and in spite of the angry remonstrances of his wife, broke off the match with Austria, and, in 1506, betrothed the Princess Claude to the young Prince of Angoulême, then heir presumptive to the throne.

"Too much credit cannot be given to Louis XII," says M. Le Roux de Lincy in his "Life of Anne of Brittany," "for his firmness in resisting the Queen's obstinate determination to carry the Austrian marriage through. What would have become of France had Charles of Luxembourg joined Brittany to the enormous dominions which, as the Emperor Charles V, he later united under his sway?"

In the beginning of January, 1514, Anne of Brittany became violently ill at Blois, and, after a week of intense suffering she died. "This Queen," says Brantôme, "was an honorable and virtuous Queen, and very good, a real mother to the poor, also all the French people cannot leave off from weeping and mourning for her."

The King shut himself up and would see no one; he directed that extraordinary honors should be paid to the dead Queen. For a week the body, crowned and clad in purple velvet edged with ermine, was exposed upon a bed of state in the Salle d'Honneur in the new part of the château. The officers of the Court came each in turn accompanied by his entire household to view the remains, and sobs and lamentations mingled with the sound of the Masses chanted continually night and day for the repose of the departed soul.

The ceremonies were protracted for three weeks at Blois; then the long funeral train set out for St. Denis. In front rode the Princes and Princesses of the Blood, dressed in black and mounted on small mules, and behind them the entire Court riding two by two on hackneys caparisoned in black. The heir-

presumptive, the Prince of Angoulême, wore a mourning cloak three ells long that trailed behind him on the ground. So frequent were the stops, however, that it was ten days more before the Queen was laid to rest in St. Denis.

King Louis not only wore black himself in sign of mourning, but he required everyone who approached him, including the foreign ambassadors, to do the same; and for many weeks games, dancing and every public form of amusement were forbidden throughout the kingdom. Even on the occasion of the marriage between the Prince of Angoulême and the Princess Claude, which was celebrated four months after the Queen's death, the mourning was not lightened. The bride and bridegroom both appeared at the ceremony habited in black cloth. *"Une austérité estrange de deuil qu'il faut noter,"* comments Brantôme.

In spite of all this ceremonial observance and the very real sorrow it represented, a sudden term was put to the period of mourning by the announcement that the King was about to take a third wife, the Princess Mary, sister of Henry VIII of England. The marriage took place nine months to the very day after the death of Anne of Brittany. The new Queen, who was young and full of life and gaiety, turned the sober Court upside down; she altered her husband's sedate habits and dragged him through such a succession of junketings that he shortly collapsed. On the last night of the year 1514 the criers were running through the streets of Paris calling out: "Good King Louis, Father of his people, is dead!"

There was no issue by the marriage with Mary Tudor, and Francis of Angoulême, great-great-grandson of Charles V, and son-in-law of the late King, succeeded without question.



WING OF FRANCIS I, BLOIS

Before long the Court removed to Blois and the rebuilding of the old feudal fortress on the right of the courtyard between the wing of Charles of Orléans on the west and the Grand' Salle on the east, was begun. It was in this wing, completed about fifty years later, that the two most dramatic episodes in the history of the château were to have their scene.

The powerful House of Guise, closely connected with the first of these events, rose to prominence in the beginning of the XVIth century, when Claude, fifth son of Réné II, Duke of Lorraine, inherited from his father the counties of Guise and of Aumale, with the baronies of Joinville, Sablé and Mayenne in France, besides other lands in Normandy, Picardy, Flanders and Haynault.

Claude of Lorraine was the ablest captain of his time, and, in reward for his military services, Francis I created him Duke of Guise, and he further advanced himself by marrying Antoinette de Bourbon, a member of the royal family. Of his ten children the eldest, Mary, became the Queen of James V of Scotland; Francis, the eldest son, succeeded as second Duke and married a granddaughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. Charles, the second son, was the powerful Cardinal Lorraine, while the third son, Claude, who married a daughter of Diane of Poitiers, became Duke of Aumale.

Claude of Lorraine died in 1550 and, on the death eight years later of King Henry II, his two eldest sons, Duke Francis and Cardinal Lorraine, became, through the influence of their niece, Mary Stuart, all powerful in the councils of the young King, Francis II. We have seen them shutting the Court up in the fortress of Amboise in the spring of 1560 in order to protect themselves from the Renaudie conspirators, and sig-

nalizing their triumph on that occasion by wholesale executions.[1] One result of these executions was the murder of the Duke of Guise at Orléans three years later by a Huguenot gentleman. The murdered Duke was succeeded by his son Henry as third Duke of Guise. He detested the Huguenots as murderers of his father, and along with his brothers, Charles, Duke of Mayenne, and Louis, known as Cardinal Guise, became chief of the League,[2] and in time the scourge of King Henry III.

This third son of Catherine de Médicis, who succeeded his brother, Charles IX, in 1574, brought to the throne an exalted idea of the dignity of the crown. His policy was to remove all intermediaries between the sovereign, dispenser of favors and offices, and his people. Everyone who had a favor to ask, from the highest to the lowest, must do so in person. At the same time the King affected an isolation hitherto unknown. Familiarities permitted by his predecessors were no longer allowed.

The Court during this reign became more than ever the centre of a tangled mesh of intrigues, plots and counter-plots, all interwoven with the maddest revelry, the most absolute license.

One can picture the scene at Blois on any morning in the early years of the reign at the hour when the King was expected to appear. Suitors with petitions which, by the King's order, must be placed in his own hand, crowd about the entrance. In the quadrangle the armed adherents of the Duke of Alençon, Henry's brother, jostle those of Henry himself, for he never, despite all his bids for popularity, succeeded in becoming more than the chief of a party. The Archers of the Guard are bantering the followers of the King of Navarre on their mas-

[1] See p. 188.

[2] See p. 48.



ENTRANCE THROUGH WING OF LOUIS XII, BLOIS

ter's easy-going indifference to the flirtations of his Queen, Margaret of Valois; while in and out among the crowd glide the emissaries of the Guises, silent, watchful and alert, noting every word of discontent, every indication of a fresh convert to the principles of the League.

Above, the windows and balconies and openings of the wondrous *escalier à jour* are filled with laughing groups of Court beauties—Catherine de Médicis' "flying squadron," the partisans of the Duke and the favorites of the King, all up to their pretty ears in intrigues and party politics.

Suddenly there is an added stir and movement, an adjustment of farthingales, a flutter of scarfs; the Archers of the Guard fall into place, the courtiers draw aside in little whispering groups, and the curled and perfumed King appears, surrounded by his mignons, his handsome face not yet wearing that look almost of madness that his excesses were later to stamp upon it. The King passes stately up the winding stair between the curtseying bands of beauties; the cavaliers close in from below, and the whole brilliant flood of life and color and movement sweeps up like a winding thread of gold-bejeweled ribbons and disappears from view.

It is, however, a very different scene that has connected the name of Henry III indissolubly with the château of Blois. There on the 22d December, 1588, the Court was assembled. The weather was cold and penetrating, a sleety rain fell and the lofty rooms and stone corridors of the château were gray with damp and fog. The King, always sensitive to outward conditions, and a prey to imaginary terrors, was harassed and unstrung. His reign had been a continuous succession of disturbances; troubles with his brother, the Duke of Alençon, troubles with the League, added to the disastrous Wars of Religion

bequeathed to him by his brothers, Francis II and Charles IX. Now, after reigning fourteen years, he found himself deserted on all sides, a mere figure of a King, while the Duke of Guise usurped the real authority, and, as Henry firmly believed, only waited his chance to depose him. On this day there had been an interview which put the final touch to the King's alarm. The Duke had arrogantly complained of the lack of confidence reposed in him. He said his purest motives were ever misconstrued, and, therefore, he had no choice but to resign his office of Lieutenant-general.

Henry was thoroughly alarmed; he was convinced that this meant that the Duke was about to get himself appointed Constable, and then and there he determined to try to rid himself of the man who had been the pest of his life. The Guises had plenty of enemies, and among them the King selected as his accomplices a band known as the "Forty-five," all bitterly hostile to the League.

The royal apartments at Blois consist of two suites, those of the King, extending along the north side of the second floor of Francis I's wing, and the Queen's, situated directly beneath them. In the bedroom of the lower suite lay Catherine de Médicis ill, weak and nervous, a mere shadow of her former indomitable self. Her son did not take her into his confidence.

It was given out that on the following day, Friday, the 23d, the King would go to the neighboring estate of La Noue and that the Council would, therefore, be held early in the morning. Before seven o'clock, the hour appointed, the Forty-five had been stationed, some in the King's bed-chamber under one of their number named Lorgnac, and others in a small passage leading from it to what was known as the "old cabinet." The King, with three of his immediate followers, d'Ornano and

the two d'Entragues, placed himself in the "new cabinet" communicating with the bedroom by a door at the farther end. He was so nervous that he could not keep still and kept sending message after message to his chaplain and his almoner in the adjacent oratory, to pray for the success of "a measure by which peace was to be restored to France."

At seven o'clock the Council opened. Shortly afterwards the Duke of Guise was seen to issue from his apartments in the wing of Louis XII and cross the court-yard. Throughout the palace there had been a vague feeling of uneasiness. It was suspected that something against the Guises was about to be attempted and messages had reached the Duke both from the Papal Nuncio and from his mother, the Duchess of Nemours, the one advising, the other entreating him to quit the Court. Even the Queen-mother would have tried to save him had she dared.

Guise, however, was a man of indomitable courage, and he had an inextinguishable faith in his lucky star. To a gentleman named La Sale, who attempted to warn him, he replied that for years such dangers as those suggested had had no terrors for him, while another friendly counsellor was merely told that he was a fool for his pains.

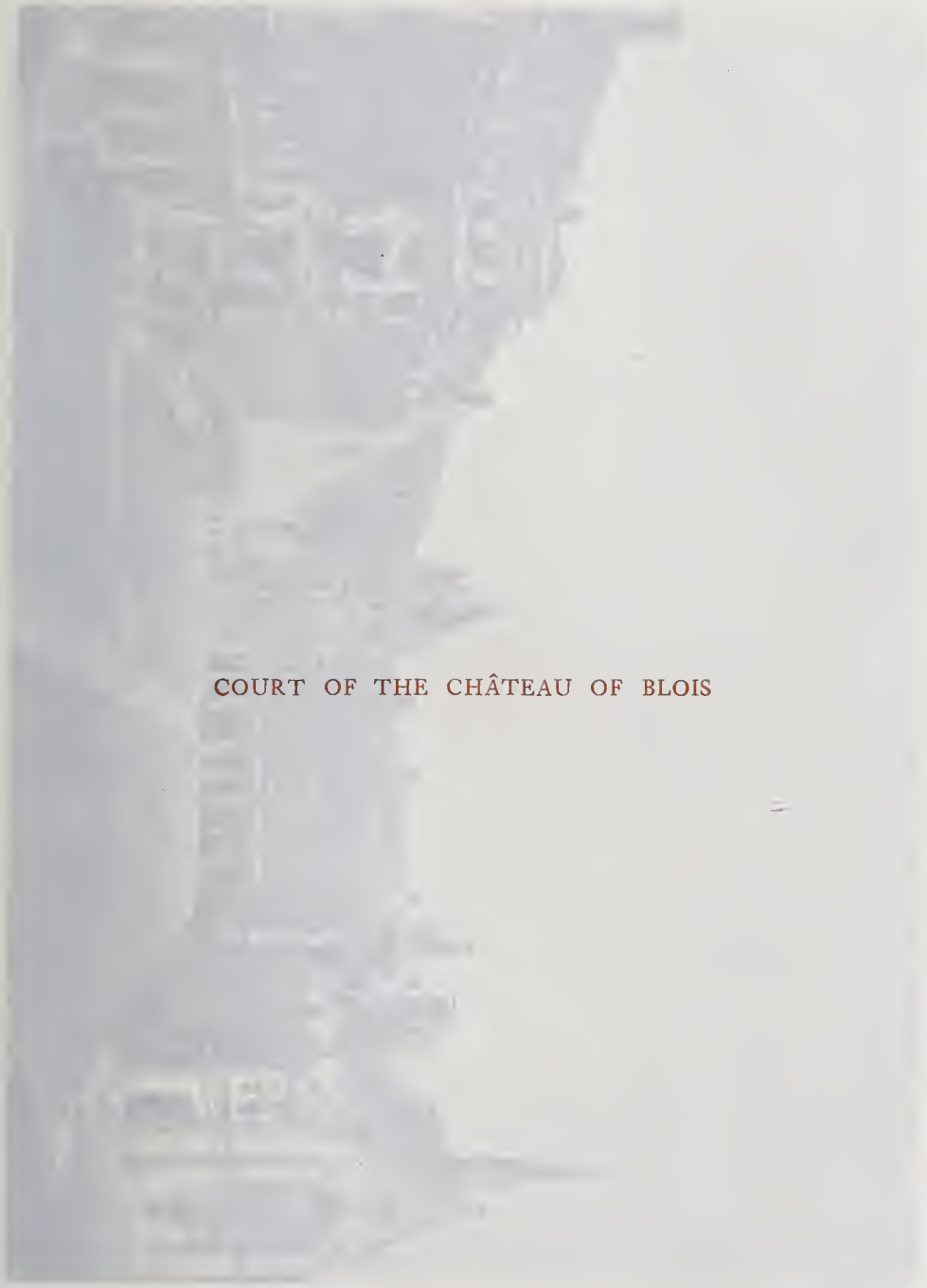
On reaching the foot of the *escalier à jour* the Duke was surprised to find a number of the Scottish archers assembled. Their captain explained that the poor fellows had come to petition for arrears of pay due them and begged for the Duke's good offices with the Council. He promised and passed on, when the Archers, swarming up behind him, completely blocked the way.

At the top, the stair opens on the great Salle des Gardes, the upper end of which was used for the meetings of the Coun-

cil. From thence a door leads directly into the King's bed-chamber, while another door close to the fireplace communicates with the "old cabinet."

The other members of the Council, many of whom were in the secret, were already assembled when the Duke of Guise entered, followed shortly by his brother, the Cardinal. The Duke crossed the room, and, without removing his cloak, stood with his back to the fire, warming himself and eating Bagnarolle plums out of a comfit-box. Presently word was brought that the King wished to speak to him in the old cabinet. Finding the door of communication fastened, Guise passed into the King's bed-chamber, saluted the members of the Forty-five whom he found there, and turned into a narrow passage on the left that leads to the old cabinet. After proceeding a few steps he noticed that he was followed; he paused, hesitated, and then turned. Instantly the assassins were upon him, and in a moment he had been stabbed in a dozen places. Embarrassed by the folds of his long cloak and unable to draw his sword, he nevertheless fought furiously and even succeeded in dragging his assailants back into the bed-chamber, where he flung them off. Turning with clenched fists and arms extended, wide-open mouth and staring eyes, he staggered across the room only to receive the final thrust from Lorgnac, who, with drawn sword, stood awaiting him. The Duke beat the air twice with his outstretched arms, then fell heavily to the floor at the very foot of the King's bedstead.

There was a moment of absolute silence; then the door at the farther end of the room was softly pushed open, the hangings were drawn aside and the crazy face of the King, well-nigh as pallid as that of the murdered man himself, was thrust in. For an instant he only stared about him. "Are you sure he is dead?" he whispered. "Sure, Sire," was the reply. Then



COURT OF THE CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS

only Henry dared to glide in and to stand gazing down at his enemy.

"Mon Dieu!" he exclaimed, "How big he is!" and he stirred the body with his foot.

Meantime a tumult had broken out in the Council chamber. At the first sound of the scuffle, Cardinal Guise and the Archbishop of Lyons had been seized and hurried off to the strong room at the top of the Tour du Moulin. The Duchess of Nemours, the Prince of Joinville, eldest son of the Duke,[1] the old Cardinal Bourbon and a number of others were likewise placed under arrest. A band of soldiers appeared suddenly in the midst of the *Tiers État,* then in session in the Hôtel de Ville in the town, and arrested some half-dozen of the members. Without being given time so much as to don their hats and cloaks they were marched off through the pelting rain to the château, where, as they filed past the open door of the King's chamber, they could see the two long tracks of blood stretching from the bed to the passageway.

After the murder Henry went straight to his mother.

"Good morning, Madame," said he jauntily. "I hope you will forgive me, but Monsieur de Guise is dead. There will not be any more question of him. I am master at last!"

Catherine gazed at him in terror, then cowered down in her bed, weeping and shaking from sheer fright. Later in the day she dragged herself up and went to visit Cardinal Bourbon in the prison where he was confined. He received her with bitter reproaches and declared that these misfortunes were all the result of her policy. After returning from this interview Catherine fell into a high fever; she never left her bed again and in less than a fortnight she was dead.

On the morning after the murder a Captain of the Guard

[1] See p. 35.

came to Cardinal Guise and informed him that he had been sent to conduct him to the King. The Cardinal followed him, but had advanced only a few steps when several soldiers set upon him in the narrow passage leading around the Tour du Moulin, and stabbed him to death. The bodies of the two brothers were burned the same night and the ashes thrown into the Loire for fear their followers might convert them into relics.

The crime was wholly without the results so confidently expected by the King, and, as far as he was concerned, it had far better never have been committed. The mantle of the murdered Duke fell upon his brother, the Duke of Mayenne, and the Leaguers, now frankly revolutionary, rallied to his standard. Henry, deserted by the entire Catholic party, entered into an alliance with his brother-in-law, the King of Navarre, and six months after the murders at Blois he was himself struck down by a young monk, who, after consultation with "a good doctor of the Church," was persuaded that to kill a tyrant was not a crime.

Blois, like Amboise, had now the stain of blood upon its walls. Thenceforth the Court only visited the château rarely and for brief periods, and though another Médician Queen did occupy the rooms in which Catherine de Médicis had passed the last weeks of her life, it was under circumstances that were hardly more cheerful.

Henry of Navarre, though a very distant relation, was the next heir to the throne and had been acknowledged by Henry III on his death-bed as his successor. He had managed in spite of the Leaguers to secure the crown. He had divorced his wife, Margaret of Valois, and had married Marie de Médicis, and then in May, 1610, just when France was beginning to recover from the misrule of the last Valois Kings and the

drawn-out disasters of the Religious Wars, he had been assassinated in the streets of Paris.

The widowed Queen became Regent, and guardian of her son, Louis XIII, then nine years old, but she made herself utterly detested, ruling France for seven years through a worthless Florentine favorite, Concino Concini, whom she created Marquis d'Ancre. Meanwhile the little King went bird-shooting with his friend Charles d'Albert of Luynes,[1] and the two talked and dreamed of the great projects they would undertake together when Louis was really King. Seven years after the death of Henry IV Luynes thought the time had come to realize these dreams. He determined to get rid of the hated favorite and he had no difficulty in finding confederates. On the morning of 14th April, 1617, Concini was shot dead as he entered the court of the Louvre. The King with Luynes watched from an upper window, ready to fly should the attempt miscarry, but of the fifty gentlemen who composed the Marshal's suite only one raised a hand in his defence. The King appeared at the window and was received with cries of *"Vive le roi"* from the crowd. The Queen Regent heard the shouts from her own apartment and understood that her day was over. A fortnight later she was removed from Paris to Blois, followed by the execrations of the populace.

"I have reigned for seven years," she sighed resignedly, "now I have nothing to hope for but a heavenly crown."

Nevertheless, she did hope for much else; and, finding her situation at Blois nothing short of imprisonment, she was soon plotting with the Duke of Épernon[2] to effect her escape and to set up a rival party to that of Luynes.

Owing to the situation of the château and the careful meas-

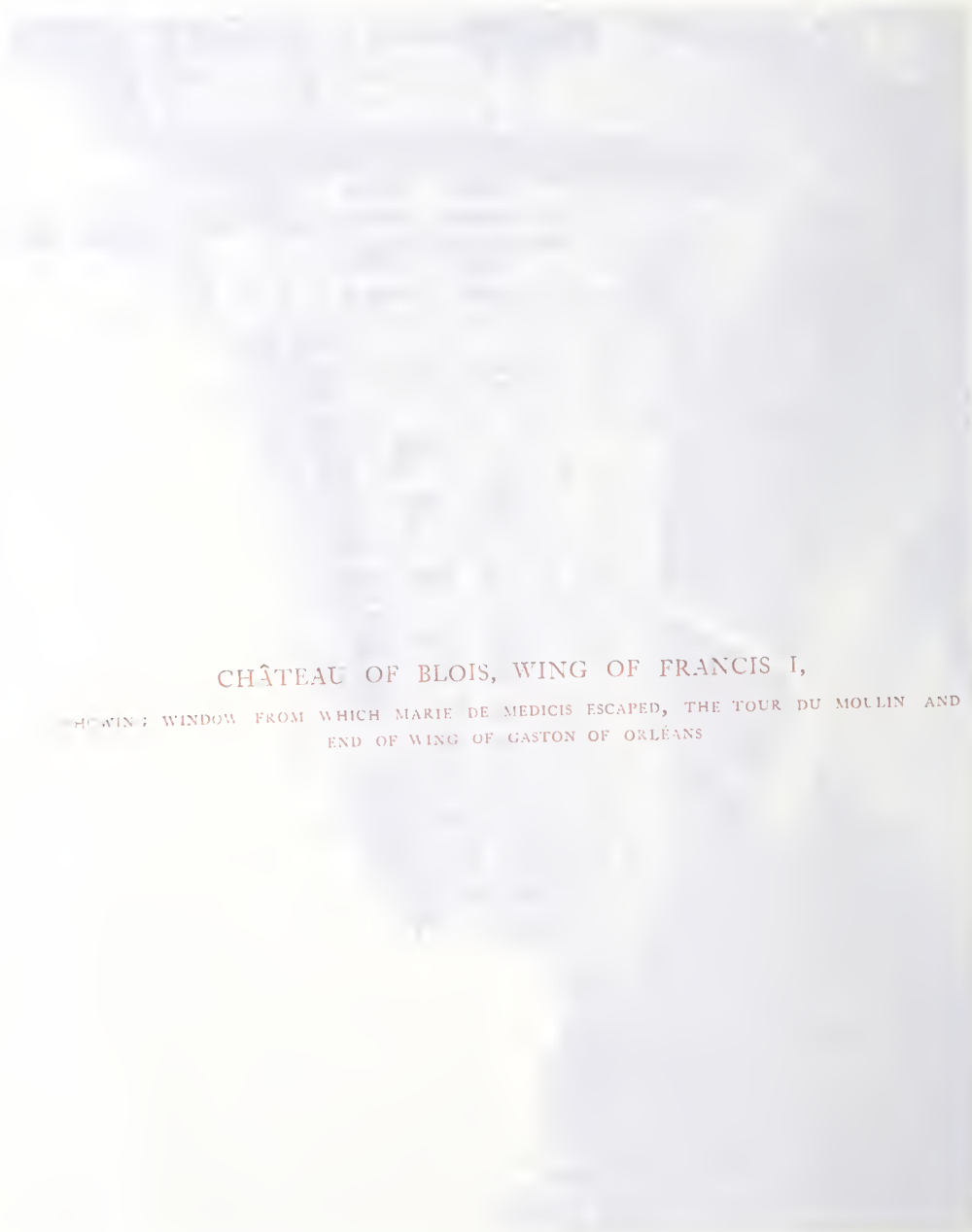
[1] See p. 247.

[2] In his youth Epernon had been one of Henry III's *mignons*. He was the most powerful lord to hold out against Luynes's government.

ures taken by Luynes, escape promised to be extremely difficult. Nevertheless, Rucellai, Abbé of Ligny, an adherent of the Queen-mother, and, like herself, a Florentine, undertook the task of organizing a rescue.

The plans took months to mature and nearly miscarried, but at last the scheme was arranged. The night of 21st February was fixed on for the attempt, and the details were arranged by a clever Gascon named Cardillac. The Queen occupied the royal suite of apartments on the first floor of the wing of Francis I—the bedroom in which Catherine de Médicis had died, the oratory, and beyond that the wainscotted *cabinet de travail,* with the interlaced C. and H. for Catherine and Henry, and its secret cupboards in the panelling. As guards were stationed by Luynes' orders in all the corridors and stairways of the building as well as at every door of egress, Cardillac decided that the only way for the Queen to get away unseen was by one of the windows on the north of the château overlooking the town. At that time a terrace extended on this side nearly half-way up to the first floor, so that the drop was not so great as it is to-day; nevertheless, for a stout, middle-aged lady of sedentary habits, the undertaking was no trifling one. The Queen looked at the airy ladders of rope provided by her equerry, the Count de Brenne, and then at the sheer wall of the château stretching below her, and shook her head. She said she was a woman and a Queen, and such a method of escape would not be dignified; but since there was manifestly no other way she had finally to yield. On the evening of the 21st all was in readiness. The Archbishop of Toulouse, a son of Épernon, with a troop of horsemen was to meet the Queen at Montrichard, a castle half-way on the road to Loches, where she would spend the rest of the night and in the morn-





CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS, WING OF FRANCIS I,

SHOWING WINDOW FROM WHICH MARIE DE MEDICIS ESCAPED, THE TOUR DU MOULIN AND END OF WING OF GASTON OF ORLÉANS

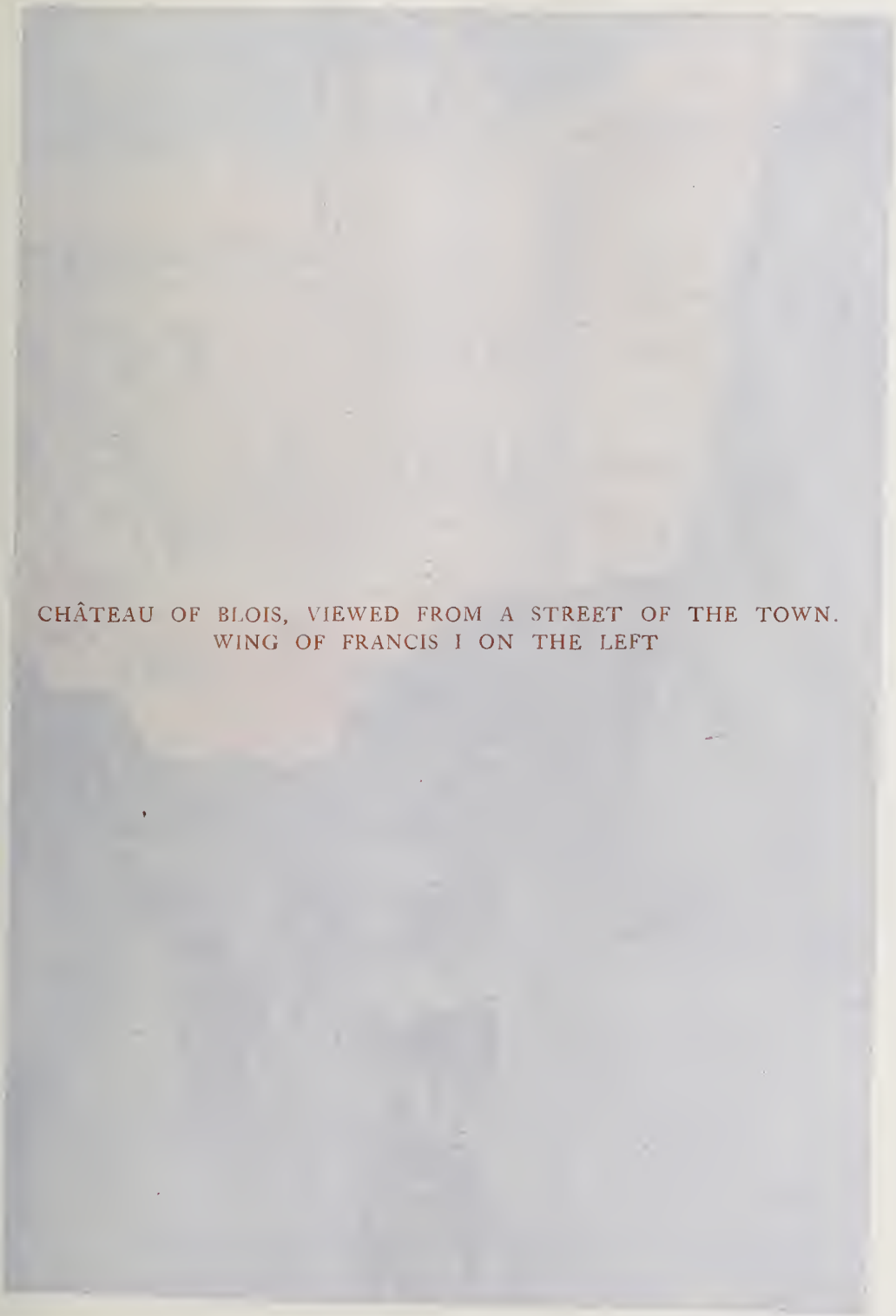
ing continue her journey under the escort of the Duke of Épernon, who was Governor there. A carriage and pair and some saddle horses were stationed at the further side of the bridge over the Loire, and fresh horses were waiting at every post. Cardillac, who had left Loches at eight in the evening with the final instructions, reached Blois at about 1 A. M. He found Brenne's ladders already in place, one reaching from the ground to the terrace, the other from the terrace to the window of the *cabinet de travail,* where a light was burning. Running lightly up he looked in. The Queen was standing, the picture of irresolution, while two members of her guard whom they had been obliged to confide in, were imploring her to think again before taking so dangerous and decisive a step. A maid, with tears pouring down her cheeks, was hurriedly packing her mistress's jewels. Cardillac tapped lightly, sprang in, and announced cheerfully that all was as well as well could be; he had just left three hundred armed cavaliers at Loches, who were ready to follow the Queen to the ends of the earth. Without a word, Marie walked to the window, and, folding her skirts about her, bade Brenne lead the way, while an attendant aided her as well as he could from above. Between them they got her to the first stage in safety, but here fresh difficulties arose, for notwithstanding all their care the Queen found the descent so terrifying that she utterly refused to set foot on the second ladder. Here was a situation! To be landed on the top of a steep embankment at 2 A. M. on a freezing February morning with a stout lady who declined either to advance or retreat and whose royalty forbade coercion! While the others held a hurried council of war the clever Gascon looked about him. He observed a gully hollowed out by the rain in the side of the terrace which reached to the street below. A

heavy cloak was spread on the ground, the Queen was persuaded to seat herself upon it, and while one grasped it firmly from above another dragged it from below and the Queen was safely tobogganed to the bottom. Finding herself on solid ground at last, Marie's spirits rose, and she was much amused when two officers of the household allowed them to pass without scrutiny, merely calling out some coarse pleasantry. Traversing the Faubourg du Foix, the party crossed the bridge without accident, but there another crisis awaited them. The carriage and horses seen by Cardillac on the spot not an hour before had gone. Again were the leaders of the adventure thrown into miseries of anxiety. They gathered in a troubled little group and were discussing the best means of meeting this new problem when a groom came running up to say that the carriage was awaiting them in a side-street. With a general exclamation of relief, the party hurried after him. The Queen got inside, the various boxes and packages were stowed away, the escort jumped on their horses, and the party took the road for Montrichard at a gallop. Suddenly the Queen uttered an exclamation; "Stop," she cried, "stop at once!"

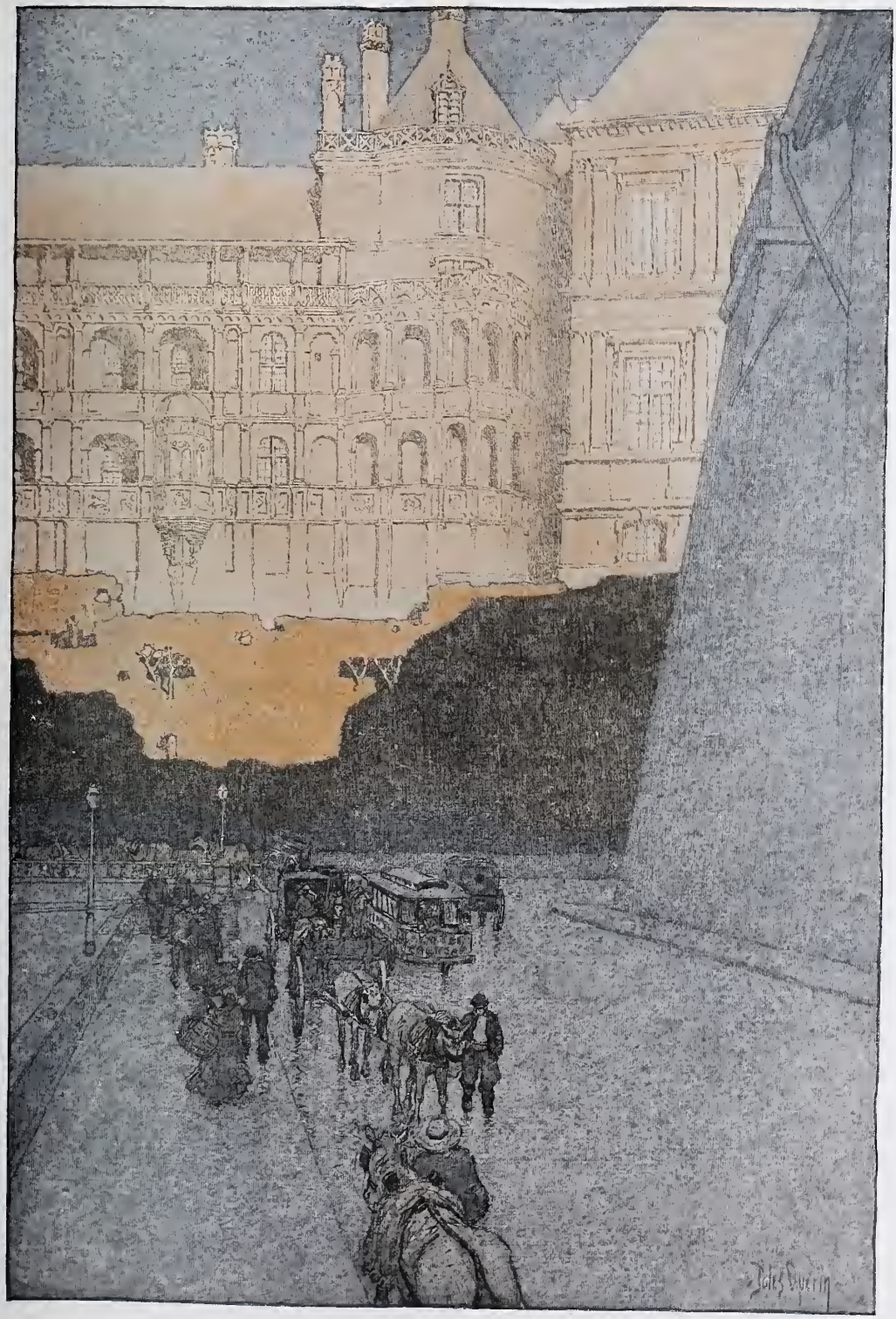
The carriage halted, and the escort rode up to learn what had happened.

"One of my packages is missing. We must turn back," said the Queen. "I cannot go on without it."

Everyone implored her not to think of doing anything so dangerous, they pointed out how much time had already been lost, and that a moment's delay would now probably mean failure. But the Queen was obdurate—go on without her package she would not. Accordingly, two of the grooms were sent back to look while the rest waited in the road. Sure enough, the package was found lying in the street where the party had



CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS, VIEWED FROM A STREET OF THE TOWN.
WING OF FRANCIS I ON THE LEFT



mounted, and brought to the Queen. She was, as it turned out, justified in persisting in this case, for the missing bundle contained jewels to the value of a hundred thousand crowns, which were, in fact, all that the conspirators had to depend upon to pay the expenses of the coming struggle.

At daybreak Rucellai and a party of gentlemen met them on the road. The Archbishop of Toulouse received them at Montrichard, and before the day was out Marie was safely lodged in the château of Loches.

At Blois consternation and amazement reigned. The doors leading to the royal suite had to be broken in. No clue was to be found, for Cardillac, the last to descend, had dragged the ladders down after him, and thrown them in the Loire. No one could imagine how the Queen and the five persons known to have entered her apartment the evening before had got out. It was long before the mystery was cleared up.

A civil war was the result of the flight from Blois, which only ended when Richelieu effected a reconciliation between the King and his mother, in August, 1620.

The subsequent career of Marie de Médicis was tragic. Some years later, for attempting to undermine the influence of Richelieu, she was imprisoned at Compiègnes, whence she escaped in 1631 and fled to the Low Countries. Her last years were spent as an exile in utter destitution, and this grandmother of Louis XIV is said to have died in 1642 in a hayloft at Cologne.

In 1625 Blois was given in appanage to the King's brother Gaston, Duke of Orléans, an incorrigible schemer, who was constantly intriguing against Richelieu, and constantly in disgrace with the King. During one of his long periods of semi-exile he amused himself by pulling down the western wing

of the château and replacing it by a building designed by Mansard.

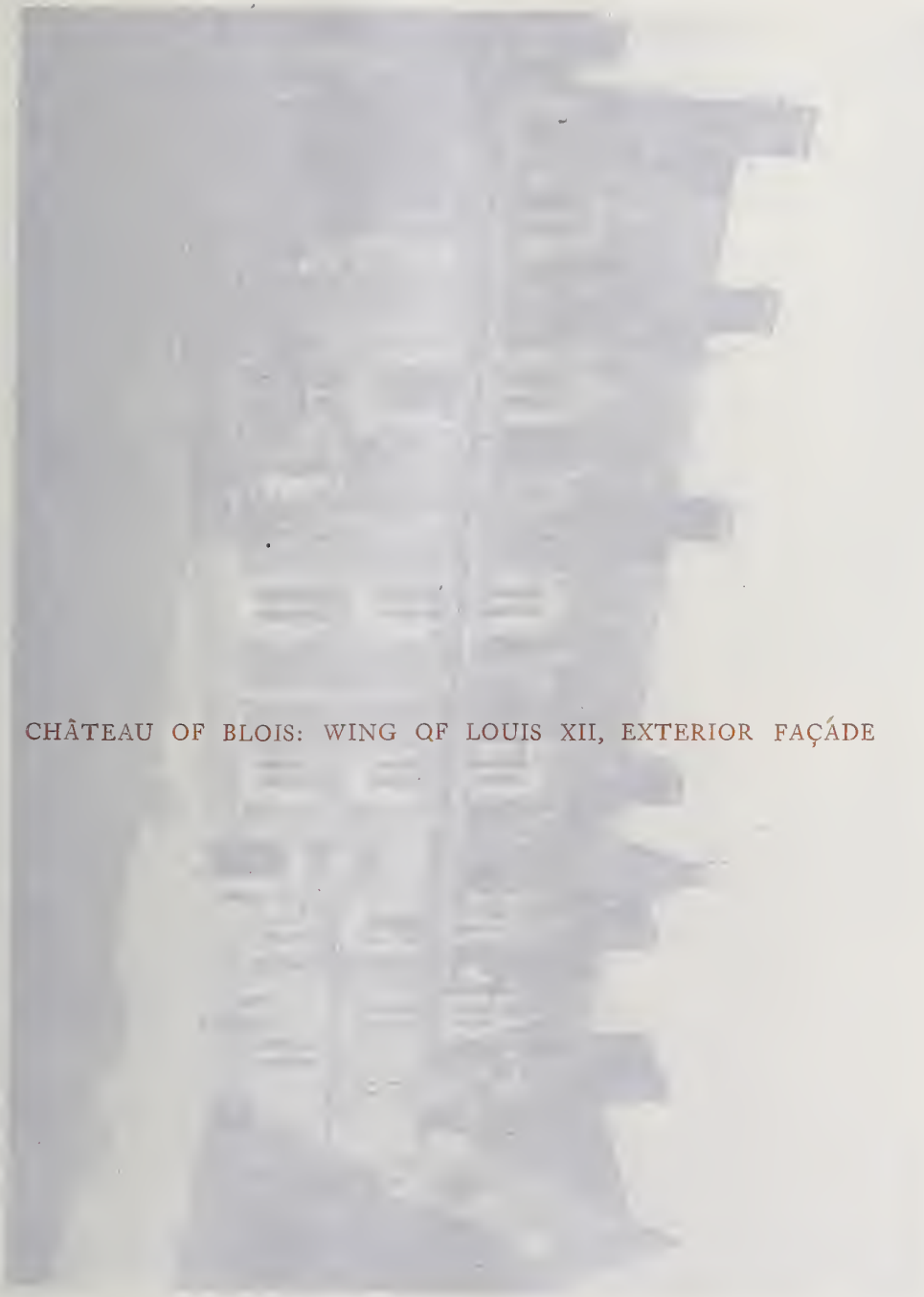
This work of the Duke of Orléans closes the building period at Blois; that of neglect and destruction began in the following century.

In 1845 the Town Council determined to save their beautiful château from total ruin and began a thorough restoration only completed in 1870. The work has been for the most part very happily carried out, especially in the wing of Louis XII, where almost all the carving, including the equestrian statue of the King above the entrance, while wholly modern, is in the spirit of the XVth century.

It being impossible to recover the rich tapestries with which in its royal days the stone walls of the château were hung, the architect conceived that the original effect might be obtained by painting the walls in set patterns with deep blues, reds, greens, and gold. The result is not fortunate.

On the south and east the town crowds closely about the base of the château. It is a busy, cheerful place with hilly streets leading down to the river and many soft old Renaissance houses and hôtels tucked away in shadowy corners. There are some old churches, too, the Cathedral of St. Louis dominating the town from a height above the Loire, and the XIIth century abbey-church of St. Nicolas close to the château. The Church of St. Sauveur, however, where the Maid went to have her banner blessed before riding off to the relief of Orléans, has gone, and a tablet on the Place du Château is all there is to indicate the site.

From the Place Victor Hugo on the north one has a fine view of the outer side of the wing of Francis I towering overhead; a splendid mass of lights and shadows with its two lines



CHÂTEAU OF BLOIS: WING OF LOUIS XII, EXTERIOR FAÇADE



of deeply embrasured windows and a loggia below the overhanging roof. The lower of the two windows on the extreme right is the one from which Marie de Médicis made her escape, while close to it is seen a part of the round Tour du Moulin, where Cardinal Guise was assassinated and the north end of Mansard's wing.

Of the Duke of Luynes, the primary cause of that adventure of the Queen, we shall learn more in the next chapter.

LUYNES

CHAPTER IX

LUYNES

THE disgrace of Marie de Médicis and her exile to Blois were brought about, as has been seen, by the machinations of Charles d'Albert of Luynes, the favorite of her son, Louis XIII. This Charles d'Albert was the son of a man of plain extraction who had taken the surname of Luynes from a property he acquired near Aix in Provence. He began life as a page in the service of the Count of Lude, and later, Henry IV placed him with the Dauphin, Louis. This Prince was extravagantly fond of hunting and Luynes excelled in all outdoor sports.

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, King James's Ambassador to Louis XIII in 1619, writes that the favorite had won his influence over the King in his nonage "by making hawks to fly at all little birds in his gardens, and by making some of those little birds again catch butterflies."

The young King became so passionately attached to this clever personage that he could not bear to have him out of his sight, and on one occasion fell into a high fever because for three days he had been deprived of his society. After the murder of Concini[1] and the disgrace of the party of the Queen-mother, Luynes occupied the chief place in the government and

[1] See p. 231.

was made eventually Chancellor of the kingdom, though quite unfitted for the office either by training or natural parts.

"The Queen-mother, Princes and nobles of that kingdom," says Lord Herbert of Cherbury, "repined that his advices to the King should be so prevalent, which also at least caused a civil war in that kingdom. How unfit this man was for the credit he had with the King may be argued from this: that when there was question made about some business in Bohemia, he demanded whether it was an inland country or lay upon the sea."

Once firmly established in power, Luynes's great ambition was to found a House. Having himself married a daughter of the Duke of Montbazon, he obtained the hands of wealthy heiresses for both his brothers, and placed all the members of his family in good positions. "Poor cousins poured out of Avignon by the ship-load and shared in his favors." In 1619 the King presented him with the estate of Maillé on the Loire, bought from a family of that name who had held it from father to son for thirteen generations. Louis erected it into a *duché-pairie* and the name was changed to Luynes, the favorite bearing thereafter the title of Duke of Luynes

The château of Maillé or Luynes, one of the most impressive feudal castles in Touraine, stands about seven miles below Tours on a steep ridge commanding the high-road that skirts the right bank of the Loire. Like so many other châteaux it had its origin in a Roman fort, the site being occupied later by an XIth century keep, torn down in the XVth century to make room for the present building. The little town hugs the bottom of the hill and partly climbs it; many of the still occupied houses both here and along the road from Tours are ancient cave-dwellings hewn out of the rock at some remote



CHÂTEAU OF LUYNES

SHOWING PART OF THE FEUDAL BUILDING OF THE XVTH CENTURY



period, and now fitted with doors and windows to meet the requirements of a more luxurious age. The chimneys are run up through the rock to the level above and stick out from among the bushes and grass at every possible angle and with the oddest effect. In some places where there is an upper story reached by ladder from without, and especially where the rocky soil shows streaks of bright red and yellow, they look like the colored pictures of the cave-dwellings of Arizona.

Luynes is a clean, pretty little town, gay too when decked for a fête.[1] Then the housewives hang out their linen sheets lengthwise before the doors and windows, thus forming a continuous drapery along both sides of the street; on these they pin roses and bunches of flowers, and down the center of the roadway they strew a path of rushes and asparagus stalks and rose-leaves. As the wind gently flaps the sheets to and fro and the sun shines upon their glistening whiteness, it looks as though the whole town had been wainscoted in Dresden china.

The main street winds and climbs and ends in front of the Church of Ste. Geneviève, a commonplace structure put up to replace an ancient church torn down in 1871 Close to it is a XVth century house with quaint wood-carvings of St. James with his pilgrim's staff and scrip and scallop shell, the Virgin with the dead Christ, St. Christopher, and Ste. Geneviève, who is represented carrying a taper, which, as fast as the Devil (seen above her shoulder) blows it out, she relights with her finger. It commemorates an adventure the Saint is said to have met with one stormy night when conducting her virgins to prayers.

The castle, which looms high overhead, is reached by stone steps leading up from behind the dusky market-place with its

[1] The fête de Dieu in June.

steep over-hanging slate roof and archaic-looking wooden pillars. On either side lie gay little gardens and vineyards and orchards terraced out of the hillside, once, no doubt, as bare and forbidding as the grim cliff of castle wall above. At the top a deep ravine is crossed by a stone bridge replacing the ancient drawbridge, and within there is a square court bounded by the buildings of the old château on two sides, by a XVIIth century wing on the west, and on the side overlooking the town and the Loire valley by a paved terrace planted with a thick row of trees.

Though the first Duke of Luynes only lived to enjoy his honors for two years (he died of fever at Monheur, December, 1621, while conducting a campaign against the Protestants), his ambition to found a House that should endure was realized, for the château of Luynes along with the title is still held by his descendants.

The only part of the château shown to visitors is the *chemin-de-ronde,* protected by the battlements and reached by a stair in the old part. From thence can be seen on a neighboring hilltop the manor of St. Venant, on the site of a convent of that name formerly supplied with water by an aqueduct whose ruins are still standing a mile or so off to the northeast. This aqueduct, long supposed to be of Roman origin, is now believed by archæologists to be "not earlier than the IIId century, and probably some three centuries later." The chapel of St. Venant has been turned into a storehouse, and such, too, is the fate of the chapel of the Canonesses of St. Sepulchre, standing close to the château across the second moat. The windows have been clumsily walled up and the fine carvings of the portal mutilated, yet enough remains to show that this must once have been a quite beautiful church, before the Revolution



CHÂTEAU OF LUYNES

followed by a century of neglect had reduced it to its present condition. The *révolutionnaire* who was responsible for most of the mischief blew his brains out at the age of eighty-one, not, however, from contrition, but because "he had the rheumatism and could not stand it."

The Hospital in the town was founded in 1690 by Louis Charles d'Albert, third Duke of Luynes. In the chapel is seen the founder's tomb, placed there because, as the epitaph states, "although he lived in this world with all the éclat to which his birth and rank entitled him, he desired after death to lie among the poor whom he so tenderly loved." Beside him lies his second wife, the *haute et puissante* Anne de Rohan, the circumstances of whose marriage were unusual. The Duke had lost his first wife very early, and in his affliction he took to spending so much of his time with the religious community of Port-Royal des Champs that his family became alarmed lest he should enter the brotherhood altogether. With much difficulty he was induced to return to the world, when the first thing he did was to fall madly in love with his own aunt, Anne de Rohan, herself destined for the Church, and who had already taken the white veil. Nevertheless, the Duke's mother, the Duchess de Chevreuse, overcame her sister's scruples, and, having influence at Rome as well as a great deal of money, she got a dispensation. The marriage took place and turned out very happily. When Anne de Rohan died, leaving seven children, the Duke promptly married again, so completely was he cured of his leanings towards the cloister.

In Luynes we see almost our last of the feudal château. At Chaumont, it is true, we shall find the main features still preserved, but without the grim, uncompromising look, the spaces of blank wall pierced only by occasional loop-holes, and the

fortress-like aspect of the whole. These things were to disappear forever, together with the necessities that gave them birth, and in their place arose the radiant dwellings of the Renaissance. No longer occupying barren hilltops, but placed on the banks of the streams, these henceforth merely played at defence, the moats serving as ornamental water-ways, and the towers as a graceful architectural device for breaking up the surface of a façade. At the château of Chenonceaux we shall find the very embodiment of this change.

CHENONCEAUX



CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAUX: PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE

CHAPTER X

CHENONCEAUX

THE village of Chenonceaux lies about twenty miles east of Tours in the valley of the Cher and on the edge of the forest of Amboise. A footpath leads across the fields from the railroad station to the park gates, and from thence the château is approached by a stately avenue.

On either hand one now and again catches glimpses of long, shady alley-ways, pierced only occasionally by a flickering ray of sunshine, and terminating in clearings that seem to lie in a sort of emerald twilight. The avenue ends at a second gate guarded bv two granite sphinxes, and facing this rises the château.

Chenonceaux is an almost perfect example of the French Renaissance before the Italian influence had come to cool down its exuberance.[1] It seems like something that has burst into spontaneous and joyous existence. You can picture the châtelaine and the architect[2] and the master-builder, exulting together in the pride of their work as it unfolded itself day

[1] "The Renaissance in France, and especially in Touraine, antedates the arrival of the Italian artists by a good many years. Rosso and Primaticcio only came to France in 1530-31." *Rapport . . . sur l'Histoire de Chenonceaux.* M. l' Abbe Ch. Chevalier.

[2] He was Pierre Nepveu, called Trinqueau, and was the architect of Chambord and of a part of Blois as well.

by day more radiant, even, than they had seen it in their dreams. Here is nothing to suggest feudality or strength. It is a place built for pleasure alone, with no thought of wars and tumults, of surprises and assaults, of sieges and sorties.

In the XVth century Chenonceaux belonged to a family of Auvergne named Marques. They sided with the Burgundians in the English wars, and the seigneur, Jean Marques, placed an English garrison in his castle. After a victory won in the plain of Saintes-Georges by the French Marshal, Laval de Bois-Dauphin, the garrison was reduced, the fortifications of Chenonceaux were laid level with the ground, and its seigneur, condemned as a traitor and a rebel, was thrown into prison, where he died. His son, taking the lesson to heart, did homage to King Charles VII in 1431, and was allowed to re-fortify his château. His son, Pierre Marques, inherited the estate and built a mill close by on a pier in the middle of the river Cher; but he got into difficulties and one of his creditors, Thomas Bohier, belonging to that family of brilliant if unscrupulous financiers whose administration under Francis I ended so disastrously,[1] foreclosed. Pierre Marques, utterly ruined, had at last to resign the ancestral home of his race, and, in 1496, Thomas Bohier took possession.

The new proprietor had been *général des finances* in Normandy under Louis XI, and had made a large fortune. Some years after acquiring Chenonceaux he pulled down all the buildings except the donjon, and he or his wife or their architect conceived the bold design of converting the mill of the Marques into a dwelling-house. Before the work had advanced far Thomas Bohier was sent by Louis XII on a mission to Italy, and his wife, Katherine Briçonnet, went on with the

[1] See p. 300.

building. It is to her, indeed, that the historian of the château, M. l'Abbé Chevalier, gives most of the credit for this masterpiece of architecture. "It is she, Katherine Briçonnet," he says, "who introduced into the buildings of Chenonceaux that fairy-like grace, that unique charm and originality of design that captivate the beholder from the moment that his eye rests upon them." She was a niece on her mother's side of Jacques de Beaune-Semblençay, later Superintendent of Finances under Francis I, and her father was Guillaume Briçonnet, Charles VIIIth's Minister and Superintendent of Finances, who was created Cardinal of St. Malo. It is related that an astrologer announced one day in the presence of his wife that Briçonnet was to be made a Cardinal. The lady, though far from pleased, took the prediction seriously, and since it could mean but one thing, made her preparations. Sure enough, before long she died, her husband, accepting his destiny, entered the Church, was made a Bishop and eventually received a Cardinal's hat from Pope Alexander VI.

Thomas Bohier died in Italy in 1523, soon after the disgrace and imprisonment of his wife's uncle and his own chief, Jacques de Beaune-Semblençay. His affairs were deeply involved and it was asserted that his accounts were short by the amount of 90,000 *livres turnois,* or about 2,000,000 francs. His son and heir, Antoine Bohier, was obliged to resign Chenonceaux to satisfy his father's debt, and the Constable, Anne de Montmorency, took possession in the name of the King, Francis I.

The Bohiers had not been able to finish their château, perhaps they hardly hoped to do so, for on the oak door of the donjon of the Marques they carved the not very confident motto: *S'il vient a point m'en souviendra* (if all turns out well, I will remember it). Yet, seen from the front, all is their work,

and even the donjon they transformed, throwing out a pointed tourelle on the one side and a tall chimney on the other, and breaking its severe surface with carved Renaissance windows.

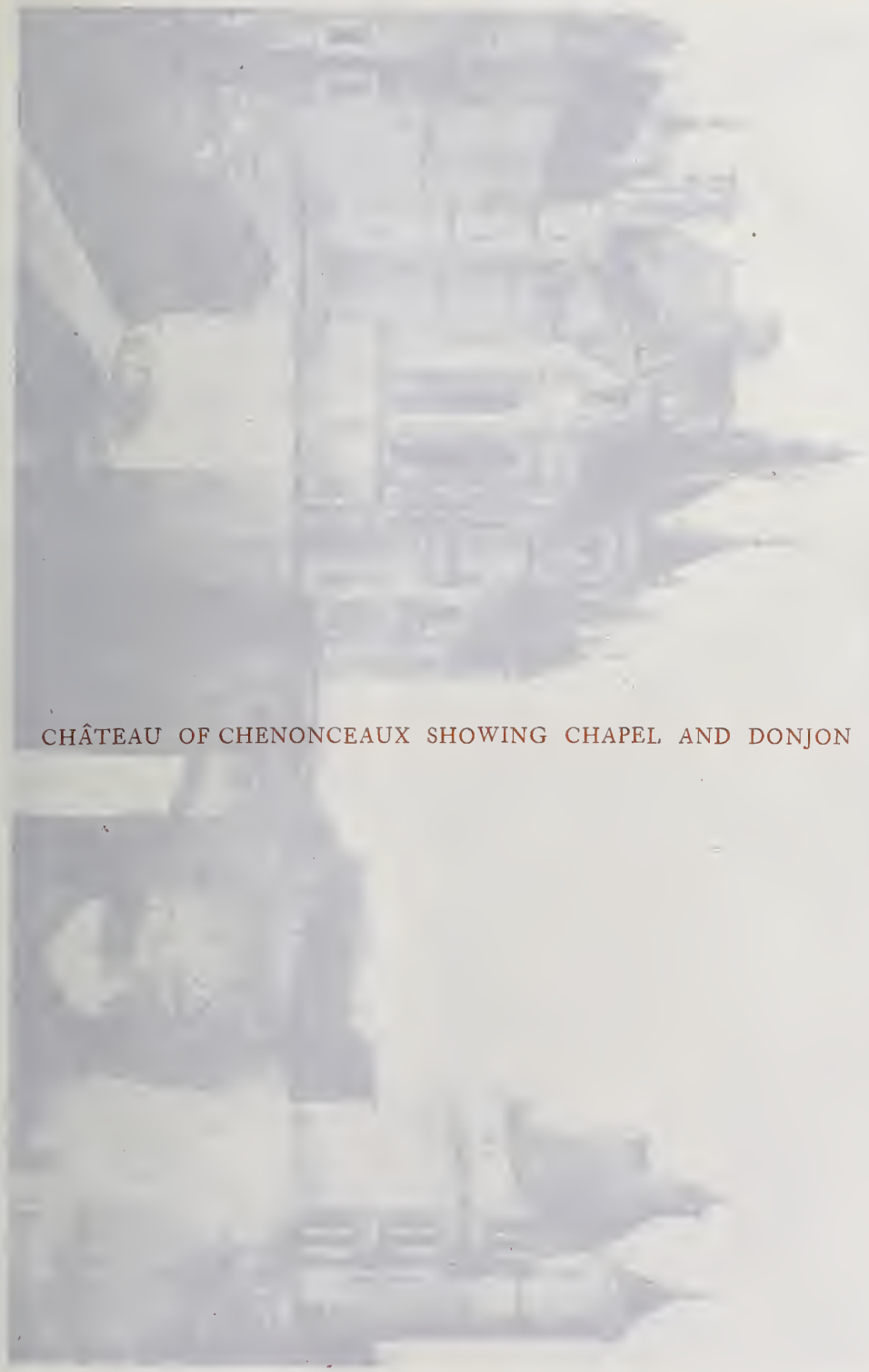
Separating the donjon from the rest of the château, runs the branch of the Cher that forms the moat. Its steep banks faced with stone are half hidden by masses of brilliant flowers, bunches of trumpet-blossoms, long spears of Canterbury-bells, the reddish bloom of the *lilas terrestre,* white marsh lilies, and many others, all, with their vivid foliage, clinging to the mossy stones and dipping down to the water's edge, or else flinging themselves up to the very summit of the embankment in a wild exuberance of life and strength.

A stone bridge cut in the centre by a drawbridge leads across the moat to a square terrace, and from the bridge you have your first view of the Cher. It ripples suddenly into view, almost at your feet, wide, clear, and sparkling, flowing swiftly through its winding channel, gurgling about the great stone piers, lapping the green banks, and reflecting every stone and pinnacle of the pile in its cool bosom.

The square main part of the building rests upon two huge piers of masonry in which are the kitchens and offices. Above these rise two stories and a steep roof broken by highly ornamented dormer windows, peaked tourelles and tall chimneys. In this roof Catherine de Médicis is said to have lodged her *escadron volant*[1] when, long after the Bohiers' day, she fêted her three sons, one after another, at Chenonceaux.

At each angle rises a round tower, and beyond the tower on the left, as you face the entrance, a lofty chapel is thrown out resting upon a single pier of its own. The main door, now surmounted by a carved stone balcony as in the original design, is of that shade of faded green that only time and a certain

[1] See p. 277.



CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAUX SHOWING CHAPEL AND DONJON

amount of exposure seem able to produce. The woodwork is painted and gilded, and harmonizes agreeably with the creamy hue of the masonry. Where the stonework gives a painful impression of lately having been scraped, it is in reality the marks of the operations which the present proprietor is conducting with every possible care, and with the object of restoring the façade to its original state.

From the door a spacious hall extends through to the long gallery across the Cher, which, although added after the Bohiers' time was included in their plan. Opening from the hall on the left is the Guard room, and beyond it the chapel, small but lofty, and containing some fine old stained glass and a carved XVIth century tribune. Other rooms are shown, the bedchamber of Francis I, with a handsome chimney-piece, and those of Diane of Poitiers and of Louis XIII. The most interesting of all, perhaps, is the small apartment called the *cabinet vert,* used by Catherine de Médicis as a boudoir and where she used to write her letters and dispatches. Of all the rooms this seems to have preserved most the old-world flavor. The ceiling, carved with her initial, has remained untouched since her day, and one can fancy the Queen, at some knotty point in her correspondence, throwing herself back and interrogating those identical carved and painted K's in search of inspiration to guide her in her crooked policy.

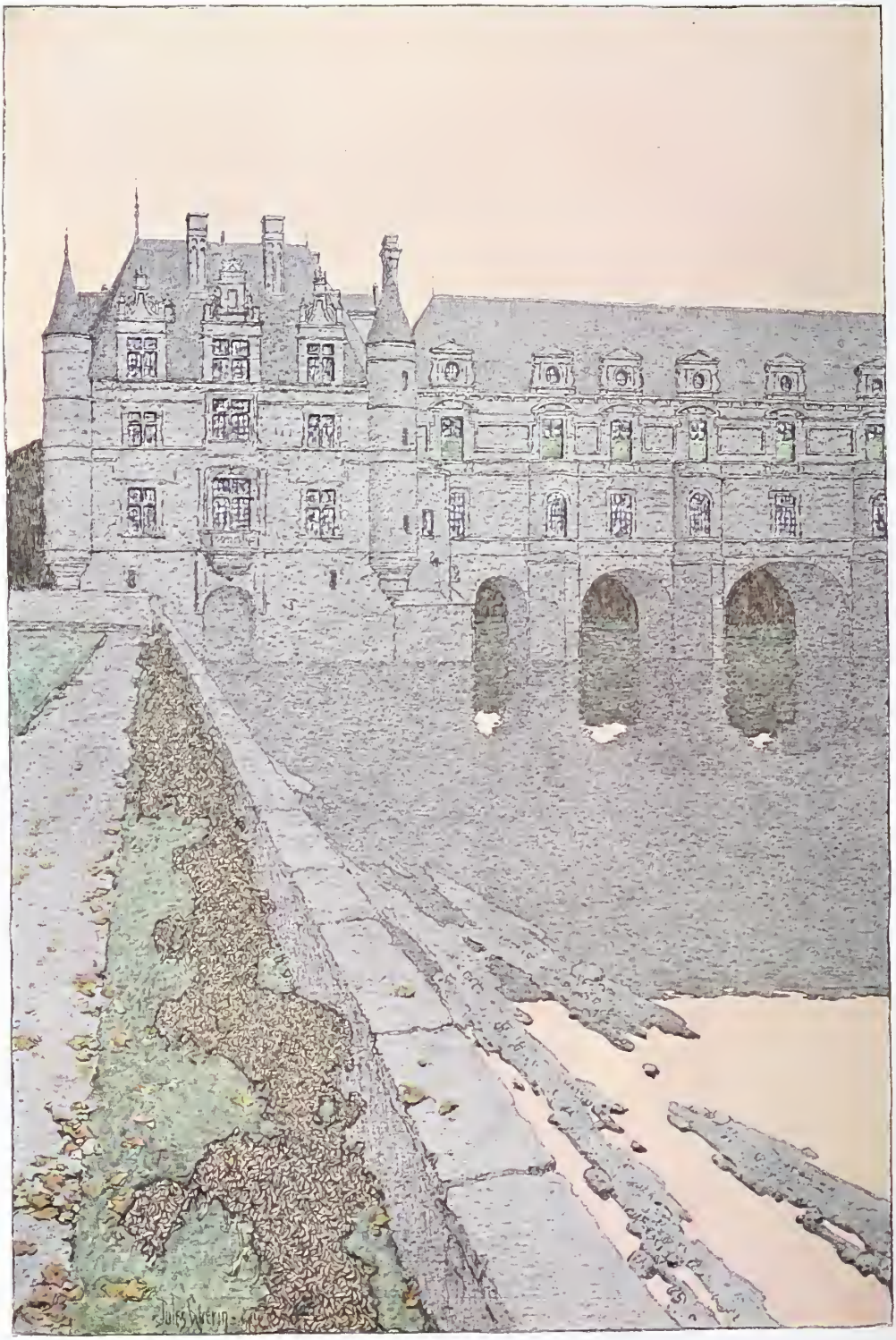
In the library are seen a number of original documents, among which it is interesting, in this place, to note one bearing the signature of Catherine's life-long rival, Diane of Poitiers, Duchess of Valentinois.

Diane was the daughter of Jean de Poitiers, Sieur de Saint-Vallier.[1] She was born in 1499 and at the age of fifteen married Louis de Brézé, Seneschal of Normandy, then fifty-five. They

[1] See p. 80.

had two daughters, married by their clever mother the one to Robert IV de la Mark, Duke of Bouillon, and the other to Claude de Lorraine, Duke of Aumale, a brother of the Duke of Guise.

In 1531 the Seneschal died, and four years later his widow became *maitresse en titre* of the Dauphin, later Henry II, then only eighteen years old. Her influence over this young Prince was absolute, and when he ascended the throne in 1547 one of his first acts was to strip Madame d'Éstampes, his late father's favorite, of her estates of Beune and Limours in order to give them to Diane, whom at the same time he created Duchess of Valentinois. This, however, was not enough. Diane had long coveted Chenonceaux, and her royal lover, alleging as his reason the "great and very commendable services rendered to the crown by her late husband, Louis de Brézé," now presented her with that estate, of which a deed of gift was drawn up in due form. Still the widow was not satisfied. Reflecting upon the ease with which Madame d'Éstampes had been despoiled in her own favor, she declared she would never feel safe until Chenonceaux was absolutely secured to her and there could be no question of the "alienation of crown property." A complicated law-suit was therefore begun. First of all, Antoine Bohier was charged with having rated the property at just double its actual value when he ceded it to the crown to satisfy the shortage in his father's accounts. He protested that it had been appraised by a royal commission and that the late King, Francis I, had approved of the transaction. No attention was paid to the protest and Bohier, suspecting a plot to ruin him, threw up his office of *général des finances* and fled to Italy. After this matters proceeded merrily. The process of 1525 was annulled and Antoine Bohier, once more and in spite of



CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAUX, LOOKING UP-STREAM FROM THE RIGHT BANK OF THE CHER

himself proprietor of Chenonceaux, was again ordered to make good his late father's deficit. As he could not do this it was announced that the property would be confiscated, but just at this point Diane, who hitherto had not appeared in the transaction, came forward and offered to buy it for 50,000 *livres turnois*. Bohier, who was brought back from Italy and forgiven the remaining 40,000 livres of debt, signed everything required of him, and Diane congratulated herself upon having a clear title at last.

The widow, at this time hard on to fifty, was still accounted the most beautiful woman of her day. Brantôme, describing her nearly twenty years later, says that even then she was as fresh and vigorous as a well-preserved woman of thirty, and so lovely that he could not conceive of a heart so stony as not to be moved merely by the sight of her. She was strong and active, with brilliant complexion, somewhat irregular features and a tip-tilted nose. Apart from her beauty she attracted by her splendid physical health and by her unalterable good-humor. Yet, underneath this pleasing exterior, the favorite hid a hard, narrow, avaricious nature in which equanimity passed for kindliness and bigotry for piety. Her fanaticism in matters of religion joined readily with that of Montmorency and the Guises, and among them they completely dominated the King.

Apart from intrigue, Diane's chief interest lay in gardening, and at Chenonceaux she gave this taste full scope. One may fancy her, a trim, graceful figure in garden hat and gloves, moving about among her shrubs and flower-beds and directing the workmen as they laid out the great parterre in the new fashion lately introduced from Italy by Passelo de Mercogliano. She employed Philibert De l'Orme to throw the bridge across the Cher which the Bohiers had never been able to build, and

was in full tide of possession, with plans for further additions on foot, when the King's sudden death put an end to all. The Queen, whom she had supplanted and humiliated for nearly a quarter of a century, was to have her day at last.

The marriage of Henry II to a daughter of the House of Médicis, though it took place when he was as yet only Duke of Orléans and the King's younger son, was from the first extremely unpopular in France. It was a mésalliance which only the bride's enormous dowry and her family influence in Italy made possible. She was a daughter of Lorenzo de Médicis and Madeleine de la Tour d'Auvergne.[1] Both parents died within a few days of her birth, leaving her one of the richest heiresses in Europe. When she was fourteen years old her uncle, Julien de Médicis, better known as Pope Clement VII, determined that she should make a brilliant marriage. His first attempt was to marry her to the Dauphin, but this Francis I, though desperately anxious for the Médician support in Italy, would not listen to. Even after he had agreed to the match with his younger son he still hung back, and it required all the address of another of Catherine's uncles, John, Duke of Albany,[2] to keep him to his bargain. Finally in October, 1533, a train, royal in its proportions, set forth from Florence to escort the little Duchess to Leghorn, where she was to meet the Pope. The country people, it is said, wondered to see the size and magnificence of this triumphal procession composed of upwards of a thousand persons and headed by Catherine riding between her cousin, Philip Strozzi, and her half-brother, Alexander de

[1] Thus Catherine and Diane were cousins, the latter's father, Jean de Poitiers, having been a son of Jeanne de Boulogne, aunt of Madeleine de la Tour d' Auvergne.

[2] He was a son of Alexander, Duke of Albany, brother of James III, of Scotland, and had married Anne de la Tour de Boulogne, Catherine's aunt. He was Regent of Scotland during James V's minority.

Médicis.[1] Though no formal announcement had as yet been made, and Catherine herself did not know the object of the journey until after she started, there were rumors abroad that it was a question of her marriage.

At Leghorn Catherine found the Pope's galley awaiting her. It had been magnificently hung with crimson brocade and cloth of gold and her own suite of apartments was furnished throughout with rare objects selected from the famous Médician collections. The journey was continued by water to Marseilles, where the party was met by the French court, and the marriage was celebrated without delay in order to satisfy the Pope's impatience. When the dowry, a hundred thousand gold ducats, was paid over in the presence of the assembled court, some of the French courtiers were heard to murmur audibly that it was very little to get for such a mésalliance; whereupon the Cardinal Hippolyte replied that they spoke ignorantly, his Holiness having engaged to give, in addition, three pearls of inestimable value, namely, Genoa, Milan and Naples. The wedding festivities lasted for thirty days, and then the bride, after receiving many costly presents from her uncle, the Pope, in addition to much shrewd worldly advice, bade farewell to her relatives and countrymen and prepared to enter on her new life.

Catherine was not handsome, but she was strong and active; she rode extremely well, had large, expressive eyes, beautifully shaped neck and arms, and great vivacity; and she was always well dressed. Yet her husband never cared for her; she had no following at court, and the marriage, ill-received from the beginning, was deeply regretted in France, when, by the sudden death of his brother in 1536, Henry became Dauphin.

[1] Called *il Duco della Città di Penna.* He was an illegitimate son of Lorenzo II, and married the Bastarde Marguerite, the Emperor Charles V's favorite child. Alexander was murdered by Lorenzino de Médicis.

The change brought no relief to the Dauphine. Already Diane de Poitiers had acquired a complete ascendency over her husband, and her troubles were further aggravated by the fact that for ten years after her marriage she had no children. Haunted by a dread of being repudiated and sent back to Italy, she did all in her power to conciliate, was involved in no scandals or intrigues, and won the careless, good-natured liking of the King, her father-in-law, by her "modesty and obedience." When at length children began to come, she spent most of her time in the nursery even after she became Queen, preoccupied with minute details of her children's welfare, their health, their surroundings and their clothes.

Thus twenty-six years went by, and then Henry II was accidentally killed in a tournament by a Scottish knight named Montgomery. The Queen expressed exaggerated grief for her husband's death, wore weeds for the rest of her life, and always maintained the fiction that she had lost a loving and adored spouse. Nevertheless, she chafed during the forty days of mourning which French etiquette required her to spend in the darkened chamber of her late lord, and one of her first acts upon emerging once more into the world was to strike a blow at her rival. Notwithstanding the extraordinary measures taken to safeguard the title of Chenonceaux, the Duchess of Valentinois was summoned to resign that property to the Queen-mother, and to take in exchange for it the estate of Chaumont-sur-Loire, bought by Catherine in 1551. She was also ordered to give up the crown jewels which Henry II had given her. The Duchess did not care in the least for Chaumont-sur-Loire and she dearly loved the château on the Cher, but, since no one knew better than herself the futility of resistance in such cases, she yielded; sorrowfully abandoned her silk-

worms and horticultural experiments, delivered over the crown jewels, and departed. The deed of exchange was drawn up at Chinon in 1560.

Catherine had always wanted Chenonceaux; she had even said as much to Francis I, whom she sometimes accompanied thither on his hunting expeditions; but no notice was taken of the hint and she had the double mortification to see it go to her all-fortunate rival. Now that the château was hers at last she was eager with plans to alter and enlarge it. Diane's bridge across the Cher was surmounted by a two-storied gallery designed for hunting suppers, torchlight dances and fêtes of every description. The Queen also erected the long, low building seen on the right of the approach, now used as stables, and made some less happy additions to the main building which have since been removed. Elaborate new gardens were likewise laid out by her orders under the direction of Bernard Palissy. Before, however, there was time to do any of these things she signalized her ownership by giving there, in the spring of 1560, a splendid fête to her son, Francis II, and his Queen, Mary Stuart.

The entire court had been almost in a state of siege, shut up by the Guises at Amboise during the Renaudie disturbances which terminated in dreadful scenes of wholesale executions Everyone was thankful to escape from the fortress and the "horror of blood" to the smiling château on the Cher.

Primaticcio directed the fête, and the young King and Queen made their state entry on March 31 beneath triumphal arches, upon which, along with the arms of France and Scotland, appeared those of England—an idea of Cardinal Lorraine, intended to emphasize Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne.

A few days later a singular scene took place at Chenonceaux.

The Prince of Condé, who had been the secret leader of the Renaudie conspiracy, selecting a moment when the King was surrounded by all the gentlemen of his Court, including the two Guises, asked for an audience. He recalled the history of his House, and their loyal services to the Crown, and complained of the small consideration with which he had himself been treated, declaring that the government of the kingdom could quite as safely be confided to his hands and to those of the members of his family as to the Guises.

Then he said that anyone asserting that he had been concerned in a plot against the person of the King, lied wickedly and maliciously, and throwing down his glove, announced that he was prepared to maintain this against anyone, high or low, excepting always the persons of the King and of the Princes, his brothers.

While the Court looked on stupefied, the Duke of Guise, who, as everyone knew, was the disseminator of the report and whose overthrow was the object of Condé's plots, with great presence of mind stepped quickly forward, and, to the amazement of the onlookers, instead of picking up the glove, he offered himself as Condé's second.

He did not think, he said, that anyone really believed the rumor, but at the same time it was satisfactory to have the Prince's own testimony to its falsity. Cardinal Lorraine, the Duke's brother, remained throughout with his eyes fixed upon the ground, without uttering a word, and the bystanders thought he seemed perturbed.

The scene terminated, Condé immediately left the Court, and no further action was taken.

Three years later, in 1563, the Court again took saddle one spring day and rode joyously off beneath the budding trees of

the forest from Amboise to Chenonceaux. But in those three years many changes had taken place. Francis II was dead, and his beautiful young widow had left France forever. The Duke of Guise, treacherously wounded near Orléans in the previous February, had succumbed six days later; while, instead of a Huguenot massacre, there had this time been enacted at Amboise a measure so tolerant in its tone towards the Reformers that for a time it put a stop to the Wars of Religion.[1]

After spending Easter together at Amboise, the Queen-mother, with the young King, Charles IX, and her other children, proceeded to Chenonceaux, accompanied by a brilliant train. In the company were the new Duke of Guise; Condé's nephew, the Prince of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV; Condé himself, accompanied by his wife, Eleanor de Roye, and their eldest son, the Marquis of Conti; and the Cardinal-Legate of Ferrara, a son of the noble House of Este, who had been dispatched to France expressly to watch Catherine. This niece of a Pope was suspected, and at that time justly so, not only of favoring the Reformers, but of pushing France towards a revolt against the Holy See. She was taking the Cardinal-Legate with her to Chenonceaux in the hope of lulling his suspicions, and he was allowing her to do so with the expectation of finding these more than justified.

It was Catherine's idea that the waning popularity of the Valois Kings could be revived by pageants and revels. Wherever she went she was accompanied by a troop of beautiful young women called in the slang of the day the "flying squadron," because their attractions formed a regular part of the Queen-mother's political armament. On this occasion there was a week of uninterrupted festivity. Naval battles and

[1] The Edict of Amboise, signed at Orleans, 19th March, 1563.

water fêtes on the Cher were followed by fireworks[1] and torch-light dances in the long galleries, while spirited encounters took place in the woods and gardens between troops of gentlemen and ladies of the Court disguised as nymphs and satyrs. The entertainments wound up with a grand boar-hunt, so ordered that the King could give the death-thrust without himself encountering the smallest risk!

Throughout the revels Catherine's watchful eye was everywhere. Nothing was done without her knowledge, and she flatteringly kept the Princess of Condé at her side, at the same time throwing the Prince constantly in the way of Mlle. Isabelle de Limeuil,[2] one of the most beautiful and fascinating young women of the day. Condé was soon completely ensnared and the Queen-mother, working through her maid of honor, was able to make him do whatever she wished, but at the cost of a scandal which obliged her later to dismiss Mlle. de Limeuil from court, while the Princess of Condé died neglected and unhappy in July of the following year.

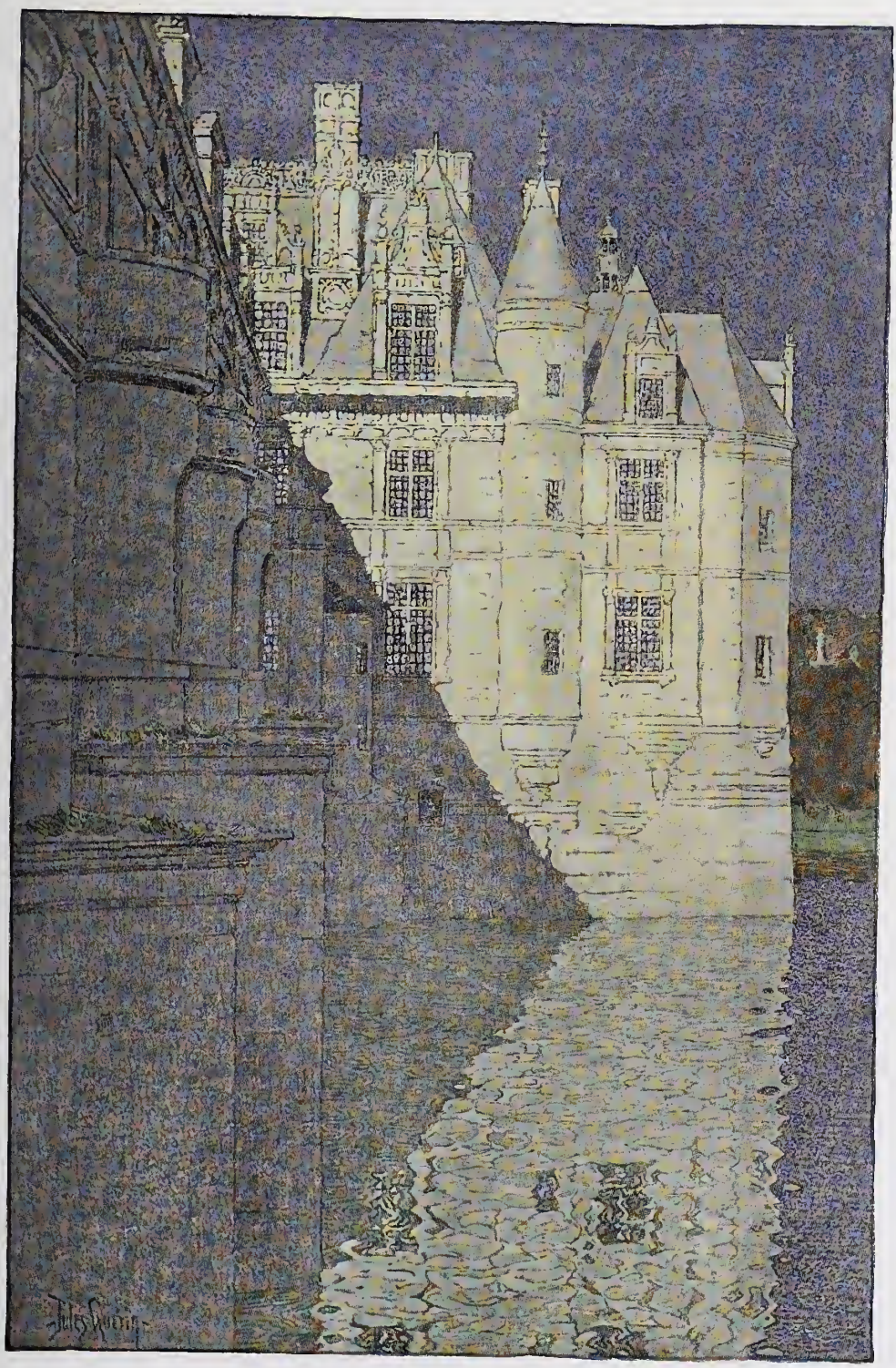
The most extravagant, however, of all the fêtes held at Chenonceaux was that given in honor of Catherine's third son, Henry III, who succeeded his brother, Charles IX, in 1574. By this time the tone of the court, at no time very high under the Valois Kings, had still further deteriorated. Henry received his guests in the garden, dressed as a woman, with low-cut doublet, a string of pearls about his neck, and two high ruffs and a deep embroidered collar, after the exaggerated feminine fashion of the day. All about him were grouped his "mignons," curled, painted and scented, and, like himself, wearing huge white ruffs. The banquet was served, on the other hand, by

[1] This was one of the first occasions on which fireworks were seen in France.

[2] See p. 322.

CHENONCEAUX, SHOWING THE CHAPEL TO THE RIGHT

VIEWED FROM THE LEFT BANK OF THE CHER.



the ladies of the Court wearing men's clothing, but with bare shoulders and flowing hair. The cost of this entertainment alone amounted to 1,500,000 francs in modern money.

Catherine de Médicis died at Blois in January, 1589, leaving Chenonceaux to her daughter-in-law, Louise de Vaudemont-Lorraine, the wife of Henry III. This gentle, pious lady was living at Chinon in the summer of the same year in such straits that she had been obliged to reduce her suite to four ladies-in-waiting. Word came early in August that the King had been stabbed at St. Cloud by a monk named Jacques Clément. At first the doctors said that the wound was not serious and that their patient would be able to mount his horse in ten days. He wrote a line to the Queen to inform her of his condition:

Ma Mie:

You will have heard of my wretched wound. I hope it is nothing. Pray for me.

Adieu, ma Mie

Before the letter was delivered word had come that the King was dead. None of her ladies could summon sufficient courage to tell the Queen, and it was at Chenonceaux some days later that she learned of her bereavement.

This third widowed châtelaine of Chenonceaux, gentle, affectionate and truly religious, introduced new manners into the château. The weeds, white in her case, worn by Diane de Poitiers from coquetry, and by Catherine de Médicis from policy, were to her veritable mourning garments. She hung her room with black draperies sewn with silver tears, and beneath her husband's portrait had carved the words: *Sævi monumenta doloris.* The portrait disappeared at the Revolution, but the motto still remains.

Louise de Vaudemont had but a meagre income for the

widow of a King, yet she contrived not only to live at Chenonceaux in the state befitting her rank, but to give generously to the poor. At her request Philip II of Spain sent her some Spanish Capucines, whom she established in the attics of the château, the quarters but lately vacated by Catherine de Médicis's "flying squadron," and her charities were so large that long after her death the name of "la Reine Blanche," which had been given to her, was still held in affectionate remembrance by the country-people, whose interests she ever had at heart. There is an existing letter written by her to King Henry IV, whom she styles her "brother and cousin, the King of Navarre,"[1] in which she asks relief from the depredations of his lieutenant, the sieur de Rosny, who, she says, has invaded her lands with his soldiers, artillery, horses, men-at-arms, and other *maléfices de guerre* (war-spells), to the great detriment of the country-people, "who, I beg you to remember, Monsieur, are my vassals, regarded by me like so many beloved children."

This kindly lady was not able, however, to keep Chenonceaux uninterruptedly. When Catherine de Médicis died she left debts amounting to 10,000,000 francs. Henry III issued letters patent declaring her estate free from all claims or levies, and ordered that the creditors should be paid from the sale of her personal property, which consisted mainly of the furnishings of the Paris hôtel. In the disordered time that followed the assassination of Henry III, the Duke of Mayenne and the Duchess of Montpensier[2] got possession of this hôtel, with all it contained. Henry IV and his wife, Margaret of Valois, finding the estate thus hopelessly saddled with debt, renounced all claim to it, whereupon the creditors got the letters patent

[1] Henry of Navarre married for his first wife Louise's sister-in-law, Margaret of Valois.

[2] Brother and sister of the Duke of Guise, murdered by Henry at Blois. See p. 223.



CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAUX WITH GALLERY ACROSS THE CHER

of Henry III set aside and sent sheriffs to seize Chenonceaux in the name of the law. In 1564 the Reine Blanche had to resign the property and to withdraw.

It seemed for a time as though Chenonceaux were to return to the gay traditions of former days, for Gabrielle d'Estrées, Henry IVth's favorite, was the next purchaser. She, however, had an object in buying it and never proposed to live there.

Louise de Vaudemont's brother, the Duke of Montcœur, had been a most uncompromising supporter of the League,[1] and was among the last to lend it armed support in Brittany, where he was Governor. His little six-year-old daughter, Françoise de Lorraine, was not only sole heiress of the House of Penthièvre, but also in part of the huge fortunes of the Houses of Lorraine and Luxembourg. What Gabrielle d'Estrées now proposed was to negotiate a pardon for the Duke of Montcœur on condition that his daughter should be betrothed to César, the four-year-old son of herself and King Henry IV, and that the Duke should further resign the title of Duke of Vendôme and the office of Governor of Brittany in favor of his future son-in-law. For her own part, she offered to hand over Chenonceaux to Louise de Vaudemont for life, with the understanding that at her death it should go to the young couple. All of these arrangements were duly carried out except that the Duchess of Montcœur immediately succeeded the Reine Blanche on the latter's death in 1601 and the Vendômes did not take possession until 1623.

Like most of his predecessors at Chenonceaux, César de Vendôme at once set about making changes. He cut down a number of trees planted by Diane de Poitiers and was rearranging the whole plan of the grounds when the discovery

[1] See p. 48.

of the Plot of Chalais, in which he had been concerned, put a stop to his activities.[1] He was arrested and imprisoned at Amboise. Though liberated later, he feared to remain in France within reach of Richelieu's long arm, and went to Italy, where he passed many years, waiting for the end of the Cardinal's régime. His son, the Duke of Beaufort, meanwhile occupied Chenonceaux occasionally and was visited there in 1637 by Gaston d'Orléans and his daughter, the "Grande Mademoiselle." At last, in 1650, the Duke of Vendôme, returned from exile, is found magnificently entertaining Anne of Austria and her son, Louis XIV, then twelve years old, at Chenonceaux, along with Cardinal Mazarin. One result of this visit, the last paid there by royalty, was the marriage of César de Vendôme's son to Mazarin's niece, Laura Mancini.

From the Dukes of Vendôme Chenonceaux passed to the family of Bourbon through the marriage in 1710 of the Duke of Vendôme, one of the great captains of Louis XIVth's time, to Mlle. d'Enghien, the extremely ugly granddaughter of the great Condé. She outlived her husband, and, dying childless, the estate passed first to her mother, the Princess of Condé, and then to her nephew, the Duke of Bourbon, who sold it in 1733 to M. Claude Dupin, *fermier général* under Louis XV. Meantime the property had fallen into a deplorable state of disrepair. Sequestered in 1677, for twenty years it had been administered in the interests of the Duke of Vendôme's creditors; the timber

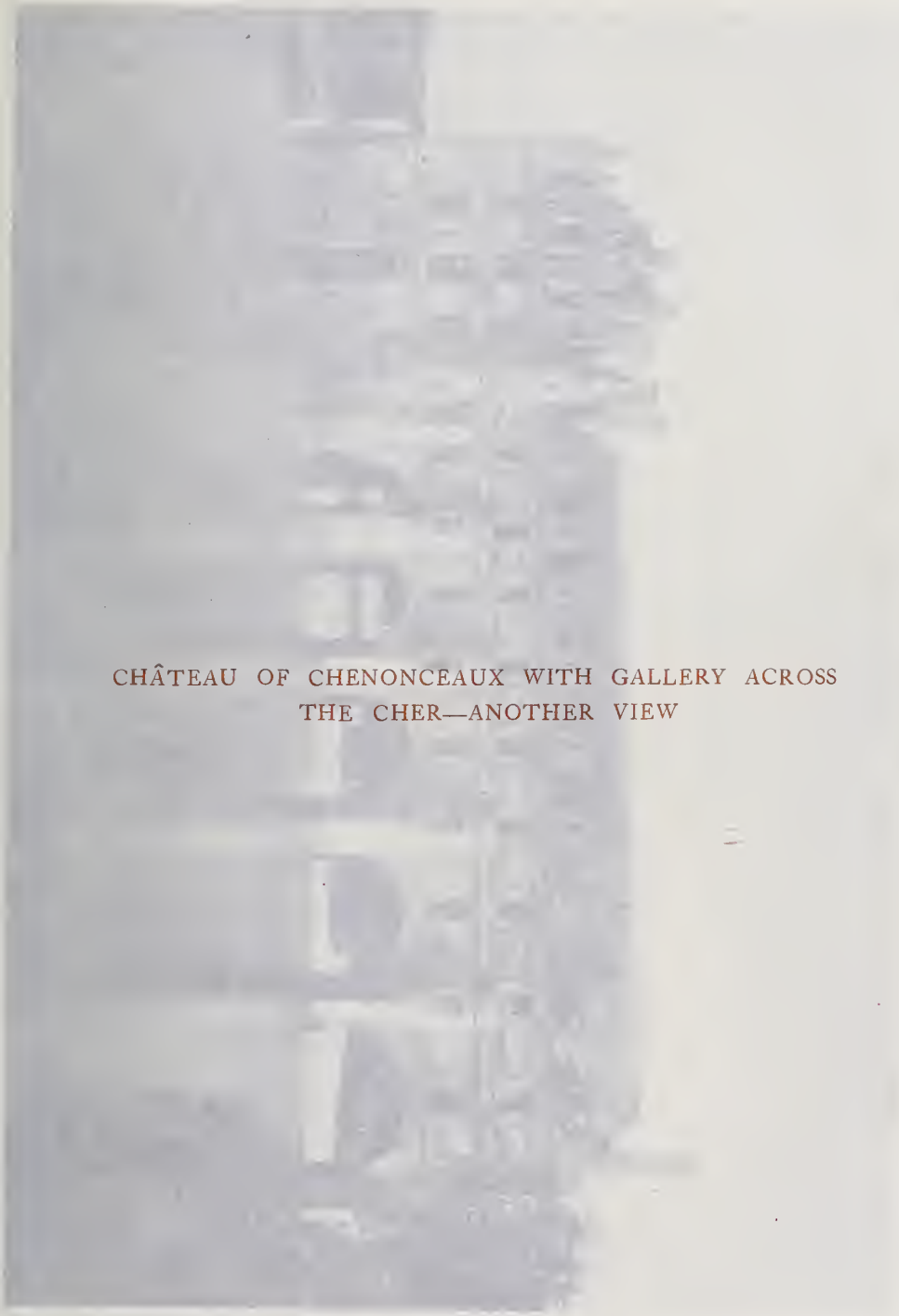
[1] The Chalais Conspiracy began in 1625 with a court intrigue to prevent the marriage of Gaston of Orleans, Louis XIIIth's brother, to Mlle. de Montpensier, stepdaughter of the Duke of Guise. Later it developed into a plot against Richelieu, with the possible object of placing the Duke of Orléans on the throne. When it was discovered the Duke sacrificed his friends and agreed to the marriage. Henry de Talleyrand, Marquis of Chalais, the nominal chief, was beheaded, and some of the others died in prison.

was cut, the fountains and gardens allowed to fall into ruin, and no repairs were made of any kind. All of this, M. and Mme. Dupin set to work to remedy; during their time Chenonceaux recovered something of its former éclat, and became a resort of many of the most famous men and women of the day. There Jean Jacques Rousseau, engaged for a time as tutor to their only son, wrote plays which were acted in the long gallery; Buffon discovered new beauties in the lately restored gardens, and such notabilities as Voltaire, Fontenelle, the Abbé St. Pierre, Montesquieu, Lord Bolingbroke, and Lord Chesterfield made up the brilliant society of Mme. Dupin's salon. This amiable and clever lady was, moreover, held in such universal esteem that even when the Revolution came she was not disturbed, but, old, widowed, and childless, was allowed to finish her days at Chenonceaux in peace. She died there in 1799 at the age of ninety-three.

The rest of the history of Chenonceaux is quickly told. The château was inherited by the Count of Villeneuve, a great-nephew of Mme. Dupin, who was at the same time M. Dupin's great-grandson by a former wife.[1] This gentleman married Mlle. Apolline de Guibert, daughter of Count de Guibert, famous as the author of Napoleon's favorite treatise on tactics and also as the friend of Mlle. de Lespinasse. M. de Villeneuve was made chamberlain to the King of Holland, and his wife was a lady-in-waiting to Queen Hortense. They kept the château in good repair, and Mme. de Villeneuve, who was an enthusiastic botanist, restored the gardens to all their ancient glory. After them came M. Pelouze, son of the well-known chemist,

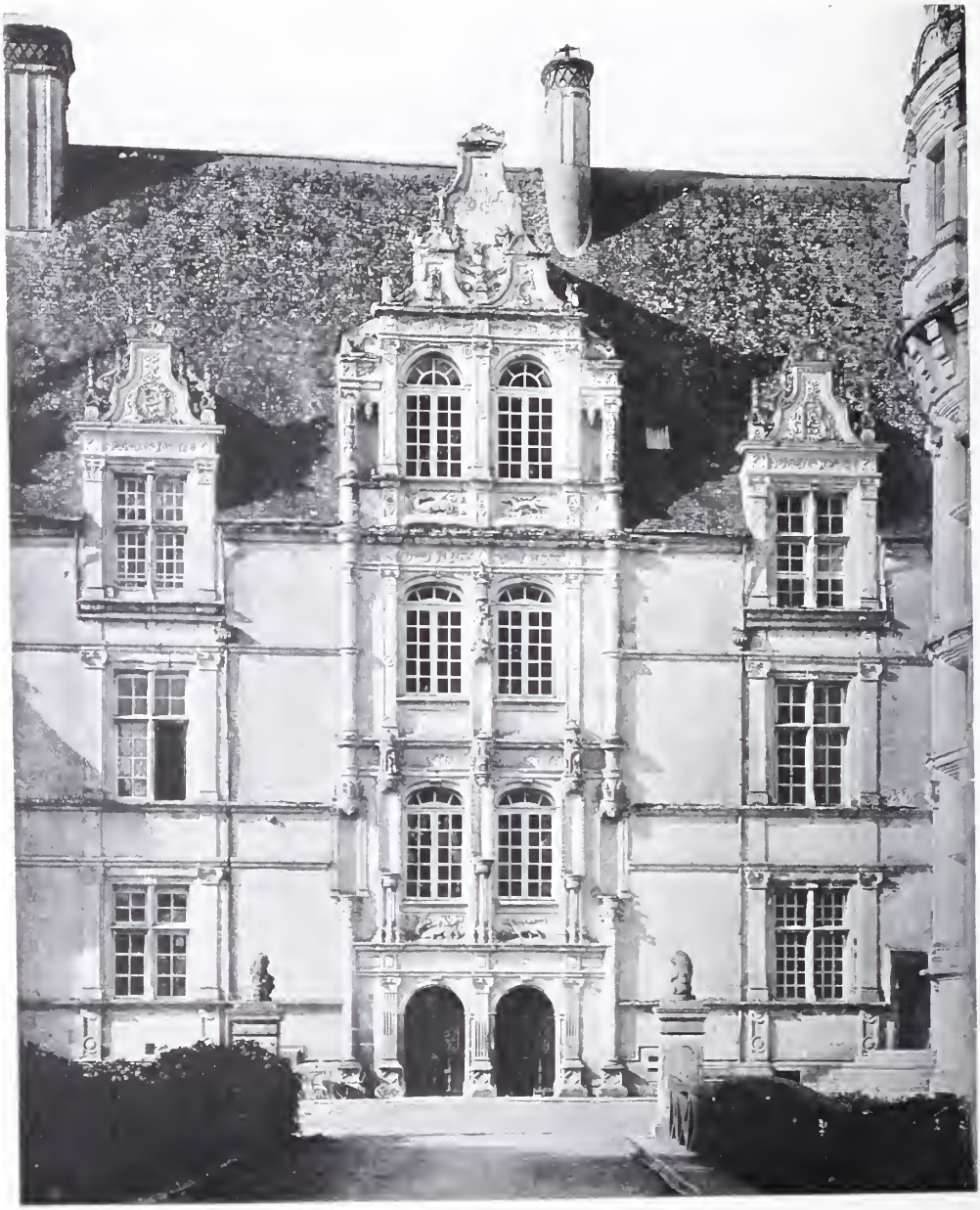
[1] Another great-grandchild of M. Dupin who sometimes visited Chenonceaux was George Sand.

who spent so much money on alterations, in very doubtful taste, that the next to fall heir to the château was the Crédit Foncier. Finally, in 1891, Chenonceaux came most happily into the possession of its present proprietor, Mr. Terry, a Cuban, under whose careful and thorough restoration the building of Katherine Briçonnet, of Diane de Poitiers, and of Catherine de Médicis has emerged once more in all its original gaiety and charm.



CHÂTEAU OF CHENONCEAUX WITH GALLERY ACROSS THE CHER—ANOTHER VIEW

AZAY-LE-RIDEAU





MAIN ENTRANCE TO CHÂTEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

CHAPTER XI

AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

QUITE in an opposite direction from Tours to that of Chenonceaux is another château belonging to the same class and period, which likewise owes its existence to one of that family of financiers of which Thomas Bohier was a member.

Azay-le-Rideau stands on the banks of the Indre in the midst of a level park planted with groves of fine old trees and brilliant flower-beds, and with a system of artificial waterways sometimes confined within the limits of the moat, sometimes spreading out into wide, still ponds, lily-fringed, and reflecting the towers and pinnacles of the château.

The entrance to the grounds is by a mellow Renaissance gateway, beyond which a broad sweep of carriage-drive bordered with lemon and orange-trees in tubs leads to the moat and drawbridge; then comes a raised terrace, on two sides of which rises the main building, large and nearly square, with a single wing at right angles; at every corner of the building is a corbelled tourelle. The ornamentation of the façade is a marvel of richness and simple elegance; twin doors surmounted by three pairs of windows form the general design of the portal, and above the doors and below the dormers are

the salamander of Francis I and the ermine of Claude of France,[1] with their mottoes, *Nutrisco et extinguo* and *Ung seul désir*.

In the summer of 1418 the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII, was rallying the scattered Armagnacs[2] and endeavoring to chase the Burgundians out of his own province of Touraine. One day in June as he was marching his men past Azay-le-Rideau along the highroad leading from Chinon to Tours, the party was espied from the château by a Burgundian garrison then in possession, who called out gibingly: "There go the leavings of the little Paris patés!" in playful allusion to a horrible massacre of Armagnacs that had recently occurred at Paris. The Dauphin's troops were so enraged by the taunt that they instantly flung themselves upon the place and carried it by assault. The Governor was beheaded and the garrison, to the number of three hundred and fifty, were hanged from the battlements. In the course of the fight the attacking party set fire to some outlying buildings, the flames spread and the town was so nearly destroyed that from then to the end of the XVIth century it figures even in official documents as *Azay-le-Brulé*. Some twenty-five years later, in dread of the English on the one hand and of the Praguerie[3] on the other, the remnant of the inhabitants petitioned the King to allow them to put up a wall of defence; they urged that "the town had already been so utterly ruined by fire in a time of war that few habitations were left and most of its people had gone elsewhere to live, leaving the said town almost deserted and without revenues." After getting their walls, however, the townspeople

[1] Claude of France was a daughter of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. She inherited the Duchy of Brittany from her mother and adopted the ermine as her device.

[2] See p. 122. [3] See p. 102.



CHÂTEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU, WEST FAÇADE

became so stiff-necked that they declined to bear their part in the defence of the castle, and even refused to give up their brand-new keys upon the summons of their lawful châtelaine, the *noble et puissante damoiselle,* Catherine du Puy de Fou, who had to take legal proceedings before the men of Azay-le-Rideau could be made to yield. The fortifications were not completed till the following reign, when Louis XI gave the completed permission to tax themselves for the purpose.

"The history of Azay-le-Rideau is the history of all the small towns of this district in the XVth and XVIth centuries. Dread of the English, dread of the undisciplined forces of the various political factions and later of the different religious bodies, drove the inhabitants to build walls of defence, and, by themselves taking measures for their own security, to depend less and less upon either king or seigneur. The crown, whose policy it was to multiply these points of resistance, encouraged them, while the nobles sometimes helped, sometimes retarded the movement; but all the time the self-imposed levies and taxes and the necessity for common action and mutual support were slowly paving the way for the communal life of a later age."[1]

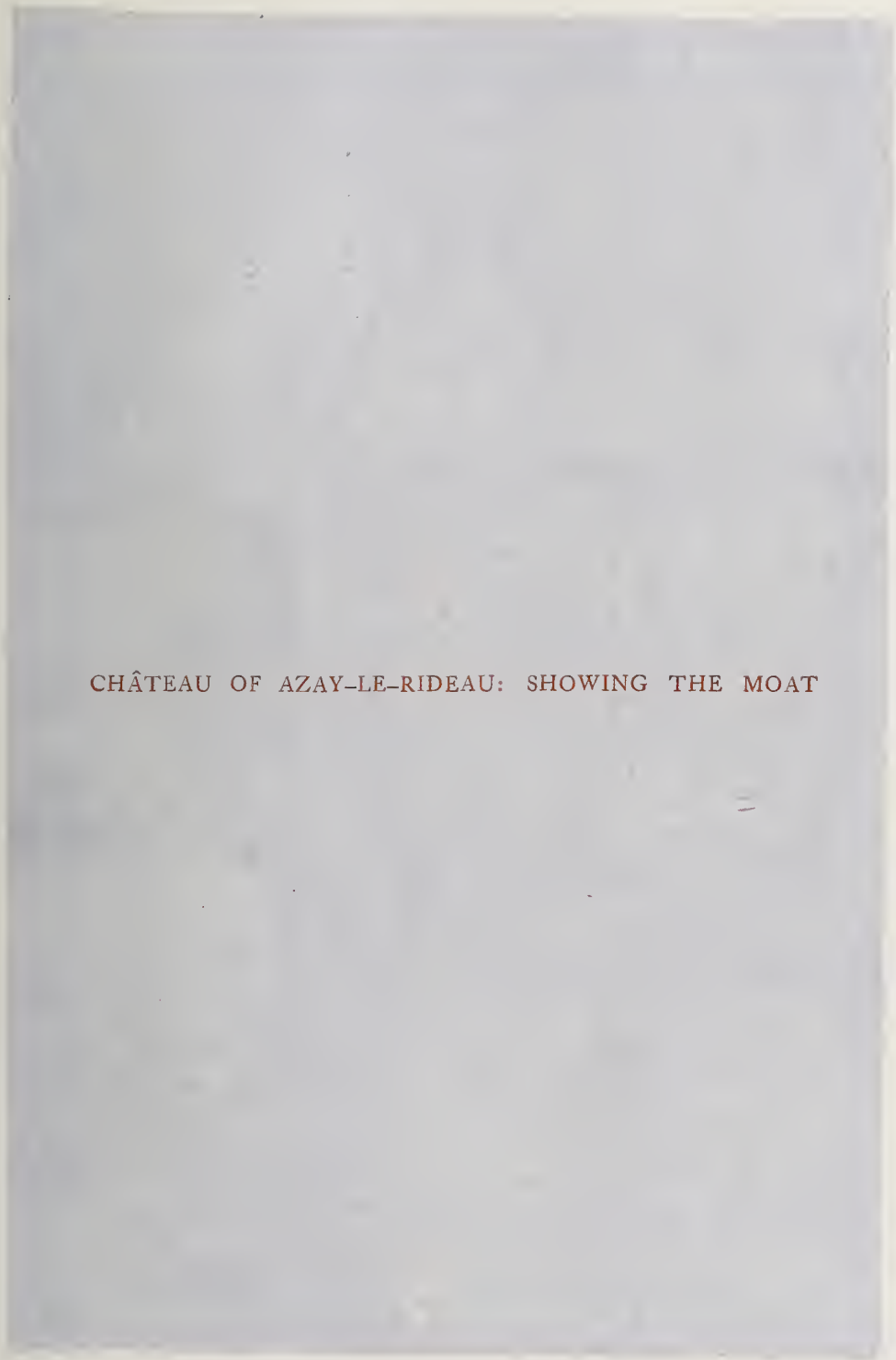
About the year 1450 the château was bought by a rich bourgeois of Tours named Bertholet. One of his daughters married Jean Briçonnet, afterwards Cardinal St. Malo, and another married Jacques de Beaune-Semblençay, while a daughter of the first, Katherine Briçonnet, became the wife of Thomas Bohier of Chenonceaux. Thanks to these family connections, Gilles Bertholet, a grandson of the purchaser of Azay-le-Rideau, obtained a succession of important posts; he was mayor of Tours and became eventually one of the four *généraux des finances* of France. As in the case of his cousin's husband,

[1] Bulletin of the Archæological Society of Touraine.

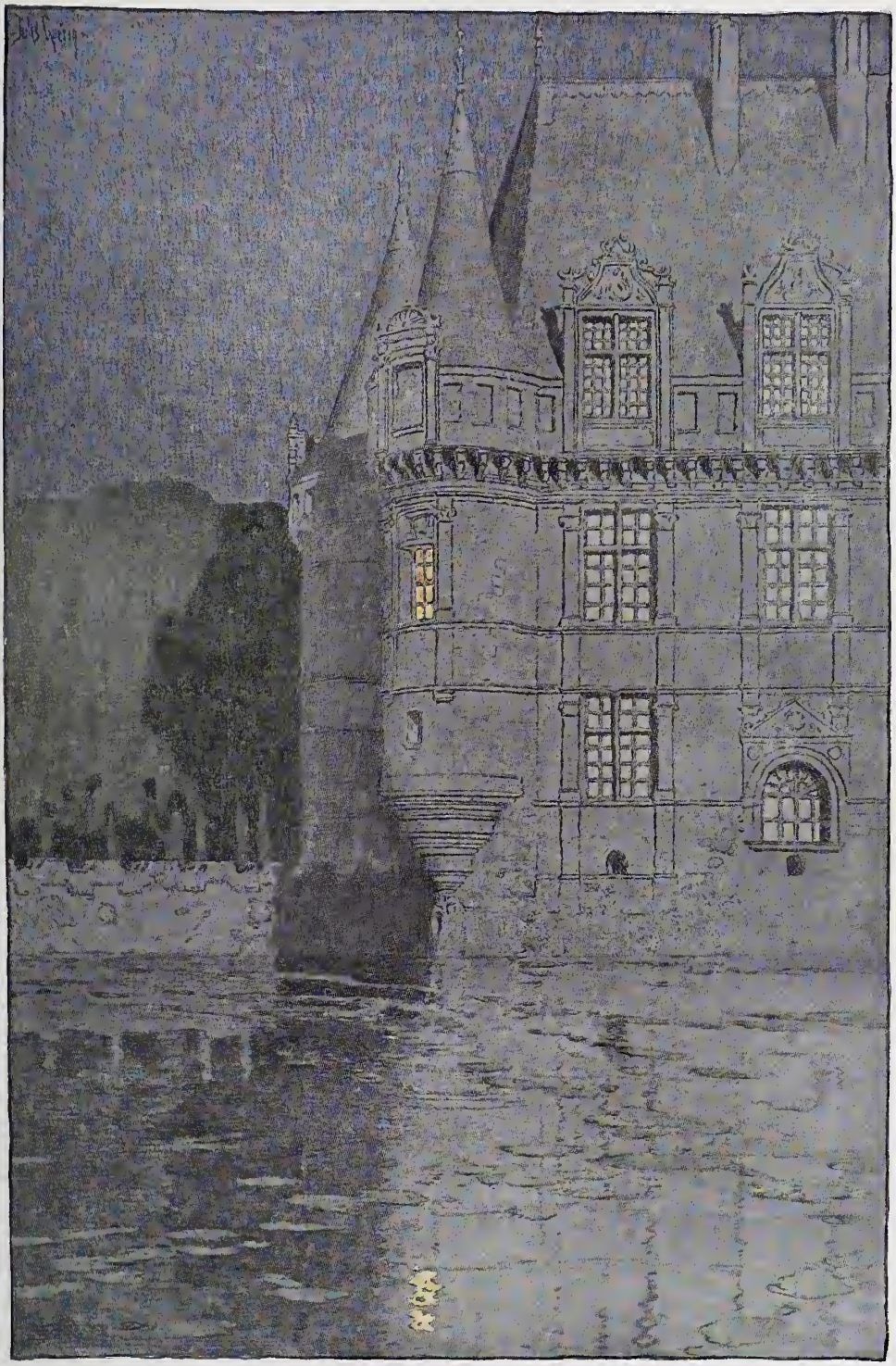
Thomas Bohier, these were no barren honors; Gilles Bertholet made a large fortune, some of which he happily expended in rebuilding the old castle of Azay-le-Rideau in the lovely form in which we see it to-day. As at Chenonceaux, however, the fall of the Semblençay administration came before the work was quite finished. Jacques de Beaune-Semblençay had been placed by Francis I, in 1518, in complete control of the finances of France, and he had the management not only of the King's revenues, but also of those of "Madame," Louise of Savoy, Francis's mother. Extraordinary sums of money were required for the war in Italy, and Semblençay resorted to extraordinary expedients to raise them; the finances of the kingdom became terribly involved, the deficit increased year by year, and still the King and Madame cried, "More! more!" Finally Semblençay reached the end of his resources; then he was seized and thrown into prison on a charge of falsifying the accounts of Madame and of having loaned money to the Crown from his own banking-house at an exorbitant rate of interest. He was tried, found guilty of "irregularities" in his accounts, and hanged at Montfaucon 11th August, 1527.

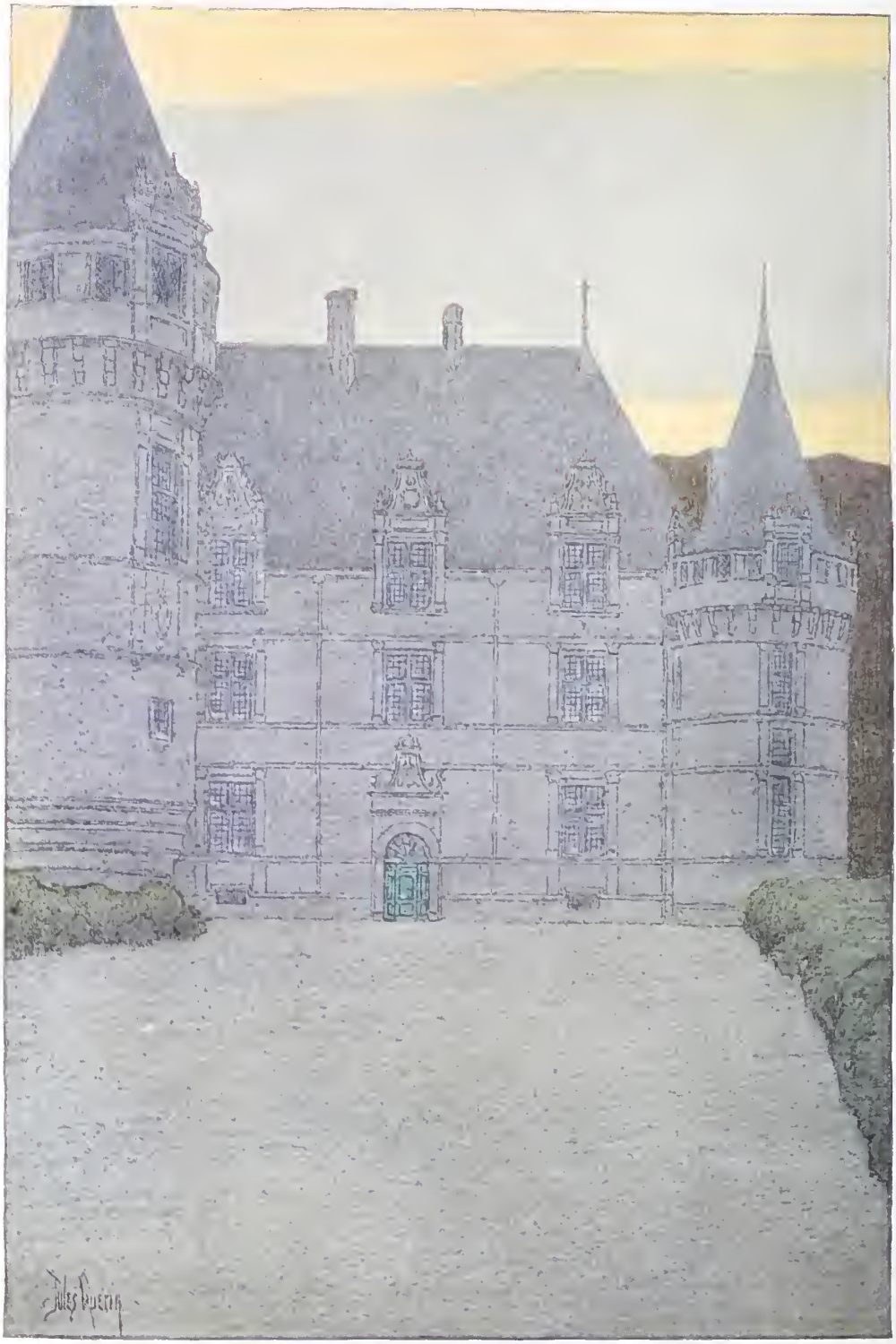
Gilles Bertholet, taking warning by his chief's fall, had already fled to Germany, where he died in exile; his property was confiscated and Azay-le-Rideau passed into possession of one Antoine Raffin, a captain of the Royal Guard.

A reminder of the Bertholets exists in the carved G and P seen below the eaves at the east end of the château—the initial letters of Gilles Bertholet and his wife, Philippe Lesbahy. The vacant squares between them once held the letters B and L, but, according to local tradition, the latter pair was removed by Antoine Raffin with the idea of pleasing the King when on one occasion he was expected at Azay-le-Rideau.



CHÂTEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU: SHOWING THE MOAT





SIDE ENTRANCE TO THE CHÂTEAU OF AZAY-LE-RIDEAU

The main points of interest in the interior are a splendid stairway and some fine carved chimney-pieces. There are also the historic rooms, that in which Napoleon spent a night on his return from the Peninsular campaign, and another, occupied at different times by Francis I, by Louis XIII, and by Louis XIV, but the famous collection of portraits that once hung there has gone, alas! the way of the hammer. In 1901 the Marquis de Biencourt, whose family had owned the château for something over a hundred years, sold the property; the pictures, together with a valuable collection of old furniture, were sent to Paris and dispersed at auction.

The church standing in the grounds dates in part from the XIIth century, but it has been poorly restored, and, except for the graceful doorway leading into the seigneurial chapel, is without interest.

No great historical events have ever taken place at Azay-le-Rideau; it attracts solely on the score of its exquisite beauty, together with its place in the history of French architecture.

"Azay-le-Rideau, Chenonceaux, the château of Loches, Amboise and Blois," says Viollet-le-Duc, "are among the most brilliant expressions of the French Renaissance, the most striking examples of the application of our ancient national art."

CHAUMONT

CHAPTER XII

CHAUMONT

THE château of Chaumont lies on the route between Tours and Blois, that is to say, it lies off the route, and the traveller must alight at a little station called Onzain, cross the Loire, and follow up the left bank for some distance (about a mile in all from the station) before arriving at the park gates. Here he is required to leave his vehicle and proceed the rest of the way on foot.

The grounds, which appear to be both beautiful and well kept, are not open to the public, and at every footpath signs warn the too enquiring stranger that he must keep to the carriage drive and stray neither to the right nor to the left. The road, hemmed in on either side by steep banks, ascends steadily from the park gates, and after making a wide curve comes out on a sunny level space gay with beds of geraniums and scarlet sage. On the right stands the château, occupying the western extremity of the plateau and protected on this side by a deep moat.

In the latter part of the Xth century this tract of high level ground was known as the "Garenne de la Comtesse," and on it Eudes I, Count of Blois, son of Thibaud le Tricheur,[1] built

[1] See p. 112.

a strong tower. Who the "Comtesse" was, or how the Count of Blois came to build his keep upon her warren, are questions to which at this day no answers are forthcoming.

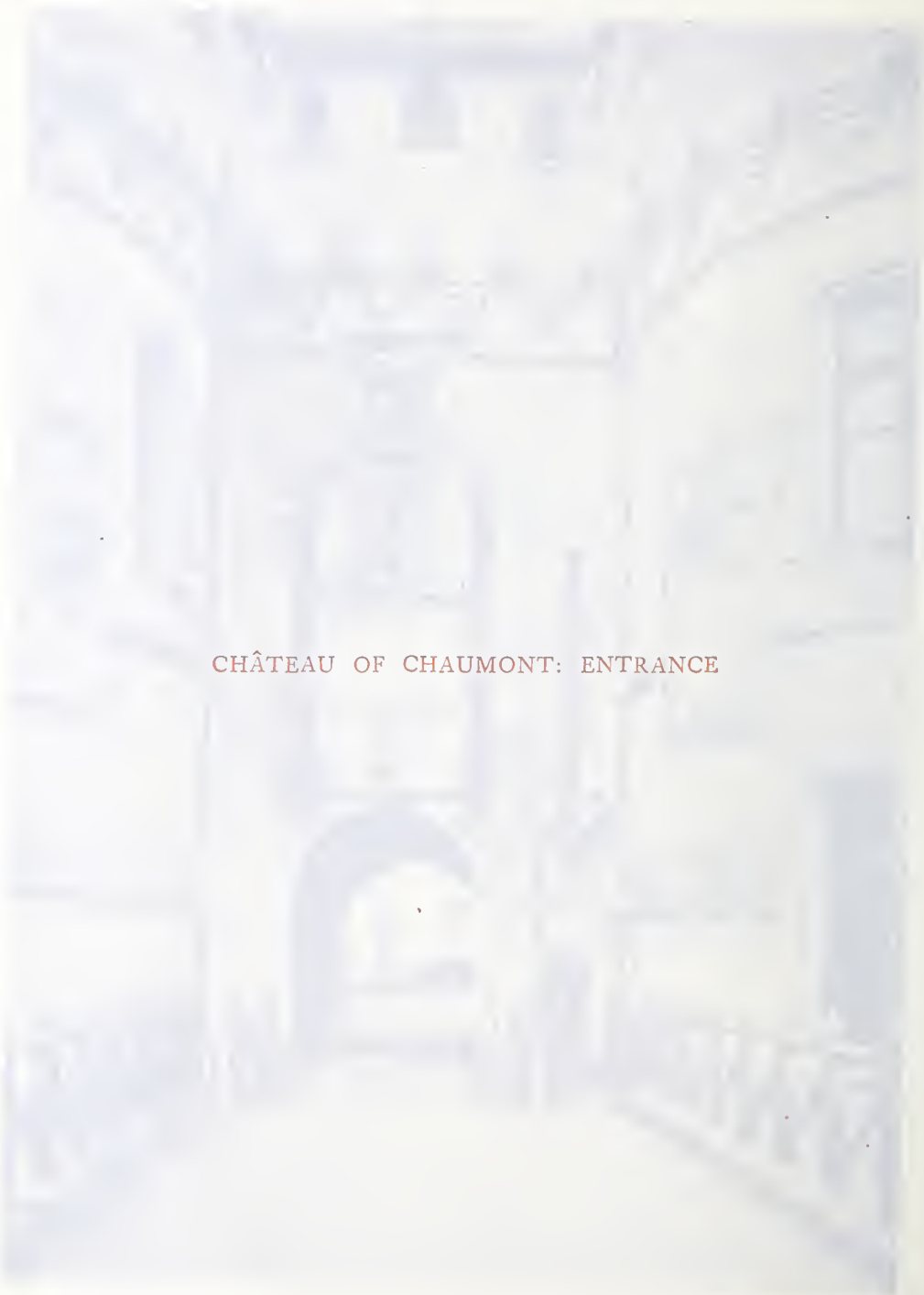
The next Count gave the tower and domain of Chaumont to his follower, the sieur of Fontlevoy, a collateral descendant of whom, Sulpice II, of Amboise, inherited it and the neighboring château of Amboise as well in 1129, thus becoming the vassal at once of the Count of Blois and of the latter's hereditary enemy, the Count of Anjou.

Egged on by the Count of Anjou (Henry II, of England) Sulpice defied his suzerain of Blois, incited others of the neighboring barons to do the same, and with them for a term of years he led the joyous and inconsequent life of a robber chief. They swept forth from Chaumont on wild forays, terrorized the surrounding country, and held high revel in the gloomy old keep. But all things have an end, and this career of gaiety and excitement was brought to a sudden stop when Thibaud V, Count of Blois, captured his rebellious vassal together with his two sons and threw them into his strong donjon of Chateaudun. After enduring tortures indescribable, Sulpice died here in 1154, but some years later one of his sons recovered the family estates, and Chaumont remained with his descendants, though not in the direct line, till 1550, when Catherine de Médicis bought it from the heirs.

In the time of Louis XI, the chief of the family of Chaumont-Amboise had been Pierre d'Amboise, Sieur de Chaumont. He joined the *Ligue du Bien Public*[1] in 1465 and was punished by having his château razed to the ground. Later the King relented and allowed Pierre's son, Charles, successively Council-

[1] A plot formed in 1464 by the great feudatory lords to depose Louis XI and to place his brother, Charles, Duke of Berry, on the throne.





CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT: ENTRANCE

lor, Chamberlain, and Governor of l'Ile de France, to rebuild it at the expense of the Crown, and very handsomely and solidly he did it as can be seen to this day.

By the latter part of the XVth century the day of feudal architecture was over: we have seen the change at Plessis-les-Tours and at Loches. Yet Charles d'Amboise must have been a man of conservative tastes, for Chaumont preserves all the characteristics of the feudal fortress; the enormously thick walls, the moat and draw-bridge, the massive towers, the machicolations and battlements; the whole rising from a lofty plateau overlooking the Loire on the one hand and falling sharply away from both ends of the château.

The moat is spanned by a draw-bridge flanked by two round towers with pointed roofs, and beside the main portal are two smaller towers admirably carved with large interlaced C's, standing for the two Charleses d'Amboise, the Chamberlain, and the Grand Master who finished the château; and with volcanoes in eruption, as a play upon the name Chaumont (*chaud mont*). Above the portal is the shield of the house of Amboise between the letters L and A, for Louis XII, and Anne of Brittany, and the latter's device of the cord and tassel. On the right are the arms of Georges d'Amboise, brother of Charles, and over a window on the oposite wall his Cardinal's hat is carved.

A vaulted passage-way leads from the draw-bridge to an open court. Around three sides run the buildings of the château and on the fourth is a wide terrace, looking down from whence you realize for the first time the strength of the position. The rock descends sheer to what seems to be a great distance and the river runs so close to its base as to leave room only for a narrow strip of land.

The two most striking objects in the court are a dark cedar of

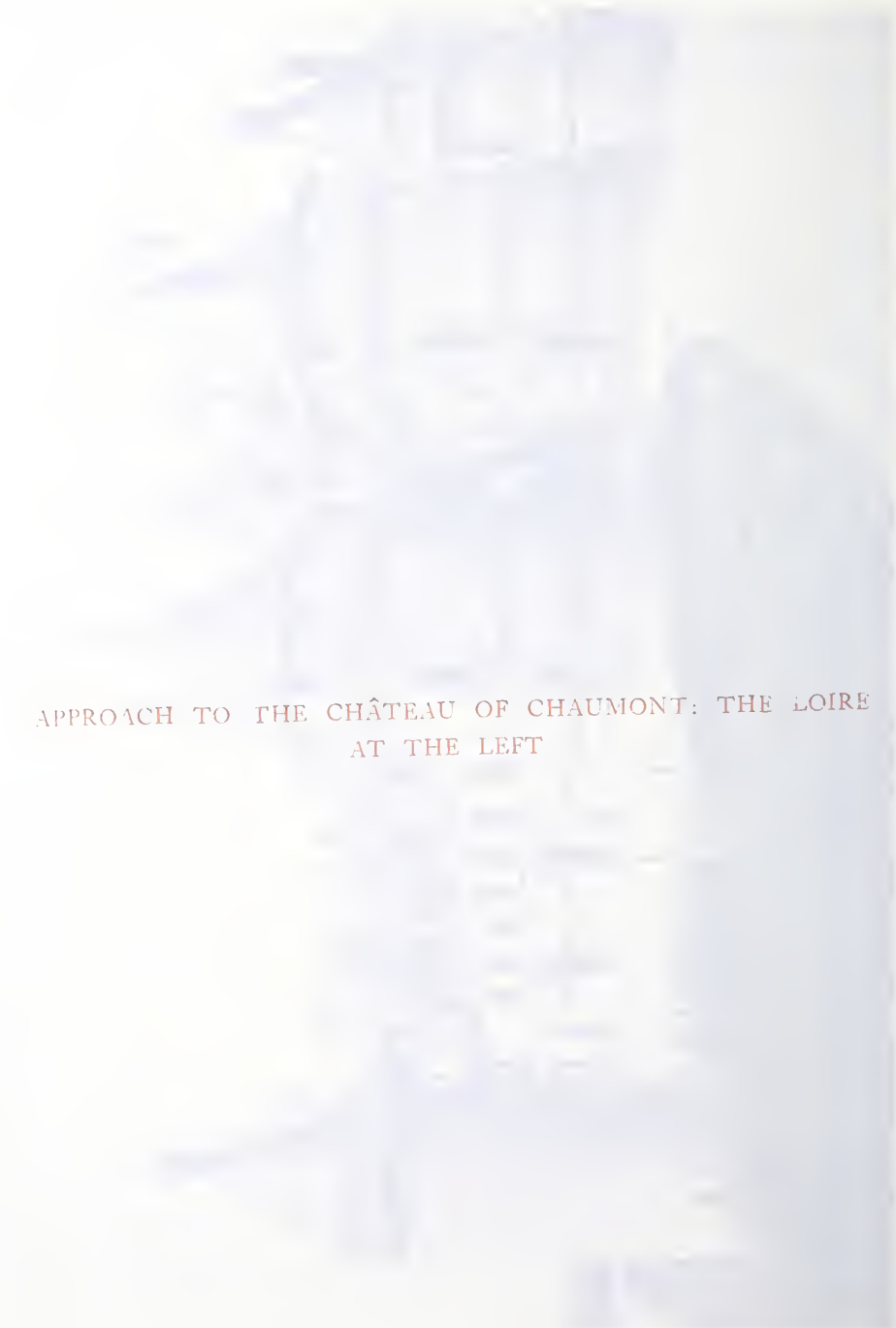
Lebanon, whose horizontal branches, stirred by the west wind, knock and beat against the chapel walls, and a carved stone well of fine workmanship surmounted by some ornamental wrought-iron work. On the south are the private apartments, and across the lower end is an arcaded gallery, from whence a spiral stair leads to the historic rooms on the north.

Pierre d'Amboise, the father of the builder of Chaumont, had seventeen children; the eldest was Charles, the Chamberlain, and the most famous was the Cardinal, Georges, who, indeed, was a very great personage, and in a sense the precursor of those other Cardinal-Ministers of the next Louis's reign.

Georges d'Amboise was made Archbishop of Rouen at thirty-eight, later he became Cardinal and then Legate; but his great sphere lay in the influence he exercised over Louis XII. He had been that Prince's trusted friend and confidant when, as Duke of Orléans, he had engaged in more than one hazardous plot; then, when the Duke became King, d'Amboise knew how to maintain his position. Tact he must certainly have possessed, for when Louis and his *chère Bretonne* quarrelled, as not infrequently happened, the Cardinal was the only person who could make the Queen listen to reason or argue the King back into a good humor. No wonder Louis had a high opinion of his Chancellor's ability; a man who interferes between husband and wife and is not detested by both can safely be trusted to handle the most delicate affairs, and *laissez faire à Georges* came to be the King's solution for most troublesome questions.

Georges, as has been said, was one of a huge family. He placed most of his relatives in good positions and especially advanced his nephew Charles, the finisher of Chaumont, whom he made Grand Master at the age of twenty-five. Brantôme, the historian, says that Charles d'Amboise was entirely governed





APPROACH TO THE CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT: THE LOIRE AT THE LEFT

by his uncle, the Cardinal, that he received all his instructions from him and obeyed them to the letter, and he adds that when news came of the Cardinal's death, his nephew had no more pleasure in life and presently died too, of sorrow. Charles's death did, indeed, follow close after the Cardinal's, but whether from grief or from poison, as some thought, is not known.

Georges d'Amboise had, however, one darling ambition that was never realized. He had fixed his hopes upon the Papacy and, it was said, might have got it had he only been a little less confident. At the moment when Alexander VI died (1503) Rome was practically at the mercy of the French troops. These the Cardinal was induced to withdraw on the pretence that their presence might give an impression of coercion in the matter of his election; but, no sooner had the troops left than the crafty Italians, who had given the advice, promptly elected Pius III. The new Pope only survived four weeks, but then it was too late, the opportunity had gone by forever, and Julius II was chosen to succeed him.

Cardinal d'Amboise died in 1510, preserving the King's affection and confidence to the last, and his nephew had time, before following him to the grave, to erect a magnificent tomb over his remains in the cathedral church of his see at Rouen.

In 1550 Chaumont was the property of an Antoinette d'Amboise; she had married a spendthrift, Louis de Luxembourg, for her third husband, and her children by her second marriage and heirs agreed with her to sell Chaumont to the Queen.

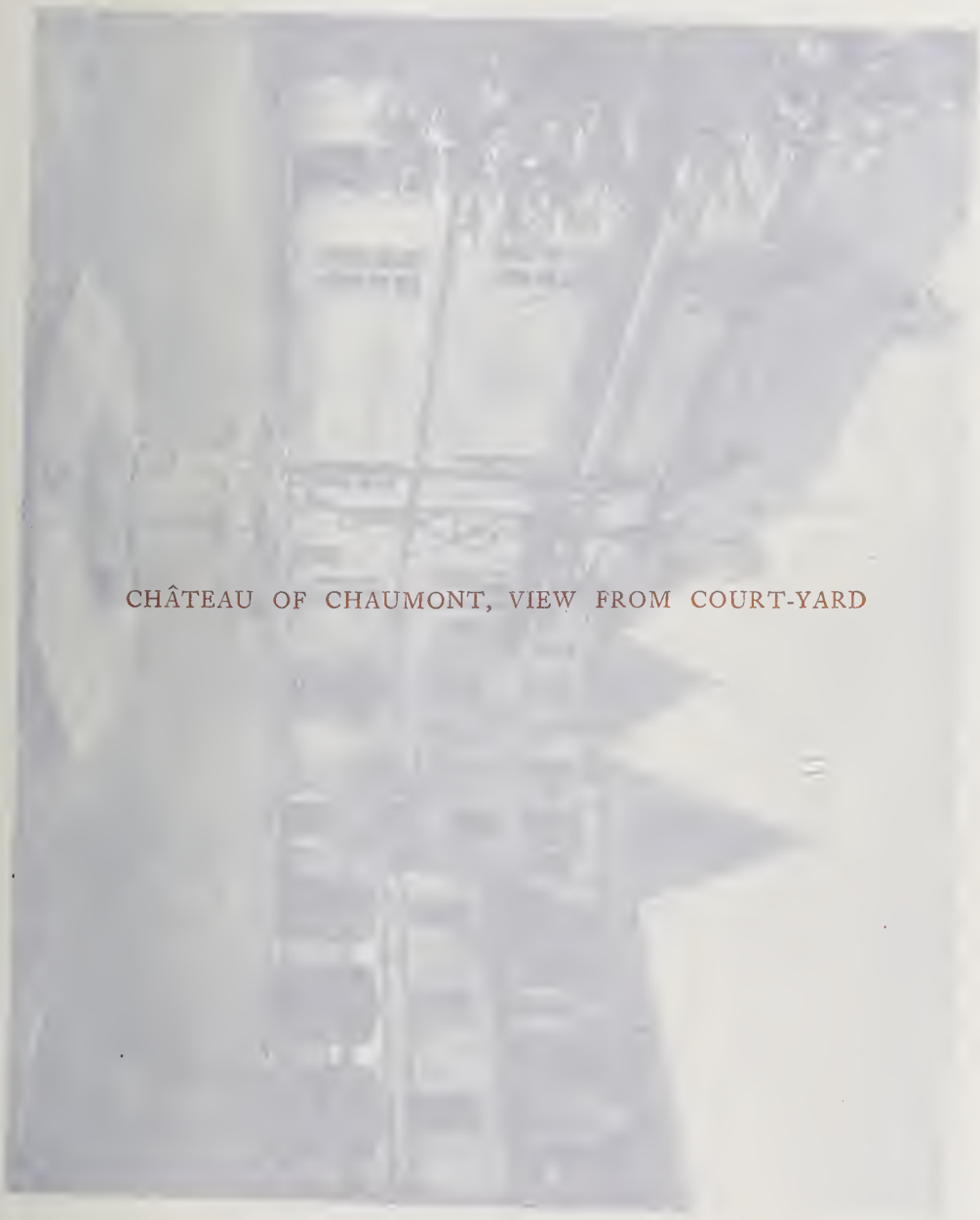
Catherine de Médicis, the new proprietor, made frequent stays at Chaumont; she fitted up a room in the donjon for her favorite astrologer, the Italian, Cosimo Ruggieri, and here, in the autumn of 1559, she came in great trouble to consult him.

Henry II had died some months before (10th July, 1559),

and at first it looked as though that event would certainly bring her relief from the mortifying position she had always held during her husband's lifetime. With Francis II, King, feeble both in body and mind, and hitherto wholly under her control, the Queen-mother thought that surely her troubles were at an end, instead of which the Guises promptly rose up to harass her. They were uncles to the young Queen, Mary Stuart, her mother's brothers, and this beautiful and winning and highly gifted young wife easily induced her husband to put himself entirely in their hands rather than in those of his mother. This was troublesome, but worse still, the King, hardly recovered from one severe illness, was now attacked by a strange and horrible disease. Mysterious fires shone from his glassy eyes, his face was livid and covered with sores, and he steadily lost strength. In this extremity Catherine could think of no better expedient than to consult Ruggieri's arts, and she came to Chaumont for that purpose.

The short October day was drawing to a close when the Queen-mother entered Ruggieri's room, situated in the donjon at the northwest corner of the pile. Through small windows cut in walls of enormous thickness, the red evening light entered with difficulty, showing vaguely the outlines of the astrologer's mysterious paraphernalia, skins of dead animals, bones, foreign-looking instruments, minerals and drugs, parchments and maps of the heavens, all scattered about in studied confusion.

The Queen first demanded to be shown the horoscopes of her four sons, but the result filled her with dismay. They were all, it appeared, to wear royal crowns (the Duke d'Alençon did not, however), yet all were to die young and childless, and two of violent deaths. Horrified, the mother asked for some other sign by which these fearful prognostications might be tested.



CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT, VIEW FROM COURT-YARD

The astrologer then led her to a mirror, in which, he said, she would see reflected the future kings of France; each would make as many turns as the number of years he was destined to reign.

Catherine waited anxiously, and presently a languid, melancholy figure drifted across the mirror's surface; she recognized her son Francis and held her breath. Slowly he began to turn himself about, but before he had completed an entire circle he faded out of sight and the Queen knew that her first-born would die before the year was out. Next came Charles IX; he solemnly gyrated thirteen and a half times, then disappeared. After him Henry III took fifteen turns and followed his brothers. Then Henry of Navarre *entre sur la carrière, gaillard et dispost;* he made twenty complete circuits and was briskly engaging upon the twenty-first when he suddenly vanished. Finally there came a little Prince, but eight or nine years old, who solemnly whirled and whirled, till, having completed thirty revolutions, and having apparently no intention of stopping, the unhappy Queen-mother declared she had seen enough, and instantly the mirror became a blank. Such, at all events, is the account of the adventure given by a contemporary.[1]

Adjoining Ruggieri's room is Catherine's own apartment, furnished with ancient tapestries and the bed and toilet-table and *prie-dieu* of the Queen, and on the last her *livre d'heures,* lying, as though she had but just passed out from her devotions.

Shortly after the experience described above Catherine parted with Chaumont to her rival, Diane de Poitiers. It was not, however, an act of grace. The beautiful Diane, as has been seen, was living at the time quite happily at Chenonceaux,[2]

[1] Nicolas, son of Etienne Pasquier, a member of the States General in the reign of Henry III. [2] See p. 274.

devoting herself to horticulture, and desired nothing less than to leave it for Chaumont, but she was not given her choice. Although she came there but seldom, spending most of her time at her two estates of Limours and Anet, her room at Chaumont is still shown, furnished throughout in black and white, the half-mourning she always affected after the death of her husband, the Seneschal. When Diane died the estate passed to her daughter, Françoise, Duchess of Bouillon.

After changing hands several times Chaumont was sold in 1594 to Scipion Sardini, who had come a penniless adventurer to seek his fortune in France, and, under the protection of the Queen-mother, had quickly found it. He contrived to make himself indispensable to Henry III, and later on married the beautiful Isabelle de la Tour-Limeuil, one of Catherine's gay maids of honor. Chaumont remained in the hands of the descendants of this pair until 1699, when it was bought by Paul, Duke of Beauvillier, governor to the royal Princess in the time of Louis XIV, and a great favorite with Madame de Maintenon.

During the XVIIIth century Chaumont was sold and resold, but among its various proprietors one at least, Bertin de Vaugien, has left a lasting memorial of himself and of his ownership. The original château of the d'Amboises had consisted of four wings built around a court; de Vaugien pulled down the entire west wing and in its place constructed that terrace which, commanding as it does one of the fairest views in all the valley of the Loire, adds so immeasurable a charm to the château.

The next proprietor was Jacques Donatien Le Ray, who bought Chaumont in 1750 and tried to turn the estate to account by establishing a terra cotta manufactory in the grounds. Financially the enterprise was not a success, but

some interesting survivals of it remain in a series of beautifully executed terra cotta medallions by an Italian named Nini, which are preserved in the château. Among the likenesses of famous XVIIIth century belles and gallants it is amusing suddenly to be confronted with the benevolent features and flowing locks of Benjamin Franklin. Le Ray-Chaumont, as he styled himself, was, in fact, a personal friend of Franklin, and immensely interested in the American struggle for independence. Unfortunately he hazarded most of his fortune in some colonization scheme that turned out badly. His son went to America to see if anything could be done, and while there, though failing to rescue his patrimony, he got himself a wife.[1] Meanwhile, however, his château was not deserted.

Madame de Staël, ordered by Napoleon to keep at forty leagues' distance from Paris, was casting about in the summer of 1810 for some convenient spot from which to superintend the publication of her work on Germany, then passing through the press. Her choice fell upon Chaumont, and there, with her family, her children's tutors, and as many of her friends as could be induced to brave the possible displeasure of the Emperor, she established herself in the absence of the owner.

Augustus, Baron de Staël-Holstein, in the notes to his mother's "Ten Years of Exile," says of this incident: "The present proprietor of this romantic residence, M. Le Ray, with whom my parents were connected by the ties of friendship and business, was then in America. Just at the time we were occupying his château he returned from the United States with his family, and though he was very urgent in wishing us to remain in his house, the more he pressed us politely to do so, the more anxiety we felt lest we should incommode him."

[1] He married a lady belonging to the New Jersey family of Grant Coxe.

Fortunately a friend came to the rescue with an offer of a neighboring farm-house called Fossé, and thither the whole party removed.

"This house," writes Madame de Staël in her Memoirs, "was occupied by a Vendéan soldier who certainly did not keep it in the nicest order, but who had a loyal good-nature that made everything easy, and an originality of character that was very amusing. . . I had always the intention of repairing to England by way of America, but I was anxious to terminate my work on Germany. The season was advancing; we were already at the 15th of September, and I began to foresee that the difficulty of embarking my daughter with me would detain me another winter in some town, I knew not where, at 40 leagues from Paris. . . . . "

On the 23d of September Mme. de Staël corrected the last proofs of "Germany," a work of which she entertained the very highest hopes; her publishers informed her that it had been passed by the censor, and in a very happy frame of mind she set out with some of her friends on a little excursion in the neighborhood. The party managed to lose their way and were gone two nights; on her return Mme. de Staël was met with the news that the entire edition of her book had been seized and that she herself was ordered to quit France within three days. No reason was given for this harsh treatment beyond some vague allusions to the "line of conduct you have constantly pursued for several years past." It was understood, however, that the offence lay in there being no allusion to either the Emperor or the army in the book. She abandoned her plan of going to America, and returned once more to her exile at Coppet.

In 1833 M. Le Ray sold Chaumont to Count Sauvan d'Ara-

CHÂTEAU OF CHAUMONT: VIEW FROM THE RIGHT BANK OF THE LOIRE



mon. He and his wife, and later the latter's second husband, Vicomte Walsh,[1] thoroughly restored the château, which in 1875 was again sold, to Mlle. Say, now the Princesse de Broglie.

These latest proprietors have finished the restoration, added a line of stables, capable, it is said, of housing a hundred horses, and have given to the historic apartments as nearly as possible their XVIth century aspect. Ancient tapestries cover the walls, the rooms are furnished in the rich and elegant fashion of "the epoch," and in the chapel, at one side of the altar, hangs the Cardinal's hat of Georges d'Amboise. All is stately, well-ordered, dignified. You have the impression of an inhabited and eminently habitable dwelling in which the historic associations have been entirely preserved.

[1] Edward, fourth Earl Walsh, great-grandson of Anthony Vincent Walsh, who fitted out two vessels at his own expense, on one of which, *La Doutelle,* he escorted Prince Charles Edward to Scotland in the expedition of 1745. He was created Earl Walsh by the Chevalier de St. George.

CHAMBORD AND CHEVERNEY



EASTERN FAÇADE OF THE CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD

CHAPTER XIII

CHAMBORD AND CHEVERNEY

THE châteaux of Chambord and Cheverney are neither of them near a railroad, but they can be visited from Blois, in the course of a single drive, what the cabmen call the *grande tournée.*

After crossing the Loire the road runs for miles through a perfectly flat, uninteresting country, as uniform and sparsely inhabited, apparently, as it was in the year 1810, when Madame de Staël and a party of friends contrived to lose themselves there one autumn evening.[1] They were rescued some time after midnight by an opportune young man on horseback, who, finding them driving aimlessly about in the forest, carried them all off to his father's château for the rest of the night.

It was probably Francis I's passion for hunting that made him select this dreary country in which to build a vast château, taking for his site the feudal fortress of "Chambourg," a domain of the old Counts of Blois that had passed to the House of Orléans and eventually to the Crown. He began to build in 1519, three years after his accession, yet, notwithstanding the huge sums of money expended, and the eighteen hundred workmen employed, at the King's death, twenty-eight years

[1] See p. 324.

later, only the central building and that part of the east wing which contains his own suite of apartments were finished. Henry II added another wing, but after his time there was no further attempt to carry out the original plan, and to this day Chambord, enormous as it is, remains uncompleted.

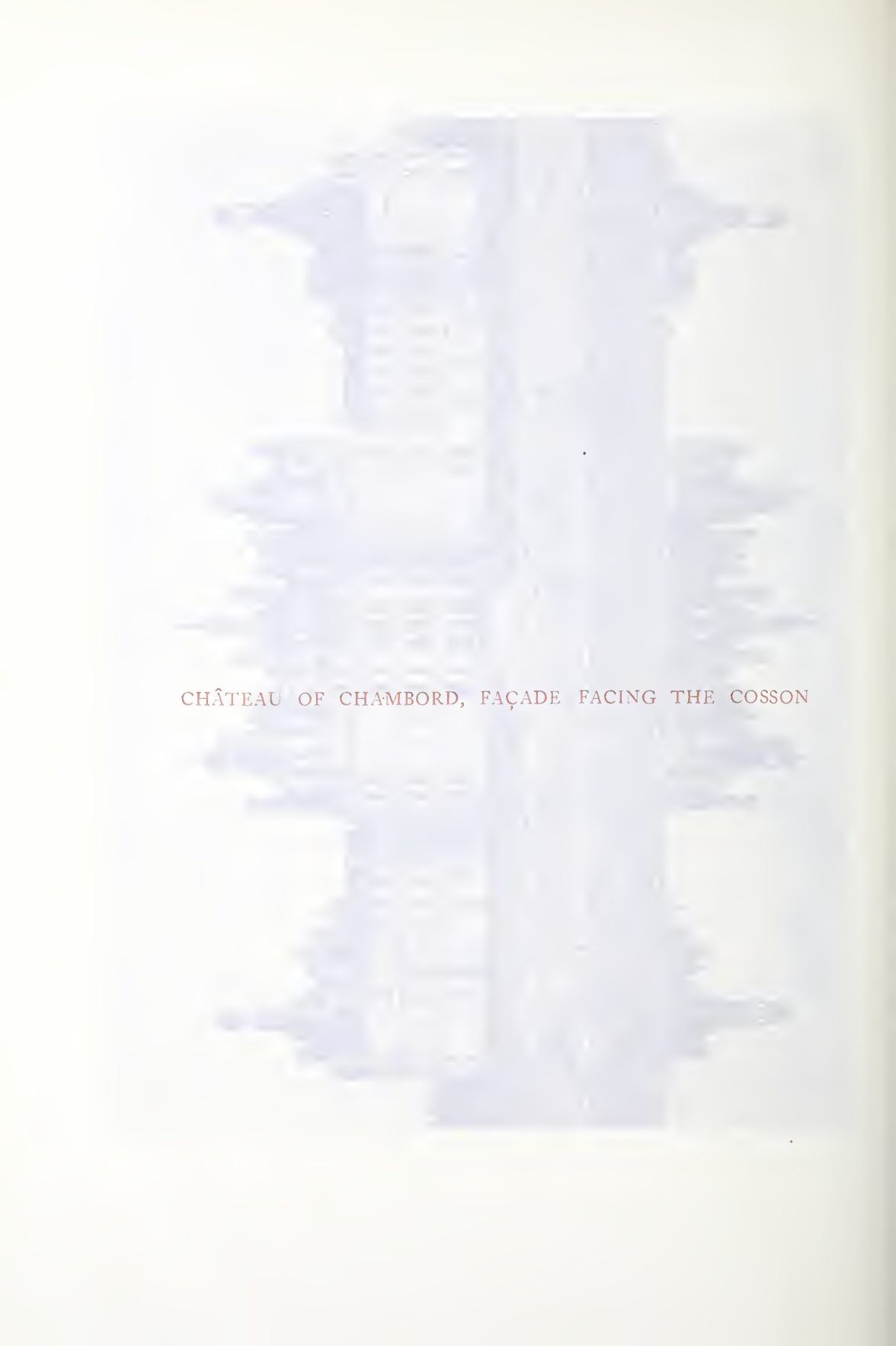
The château stands on the banks of the little river Cosson and in the midst of a park twenty square miles in area. It is approached by long, level roads, cut through the underbrush and waste of stunted trees which since 1821 have replaced the ancient forest, and their perspectives terminate in that strange and fantastic jumble of towers and pinnacles, chimneys and domes which make the roofs of Chambord unlike any other roofs in the world.

The designer of the château was Pierre Nepveu or Trinqueau, the architect of Chenonceaux, whom Francis also employed at Blois. The central building forms a huge parallelogram, flanked by massive corner towers, a survival of the square feudal donjon keep. On the north, the side facing the river, there are two wings of unequal length terminating in round towers corresponding to those of the main building. From these towers two other wings extend at right angles, also terminating in towers and connected on the south by a line of one-storied offices.

The most striking views are from the court, whence the entire group of buildings can be seen. Except for the two charming stair-towers, placed at the northwest and northeast angles of the court, the lower parts of the château are quite plain; it is only where the roof begins that it blossoms out into that wild exuberance of peaks and turrets and pinnacles.

In the interior the central building is mainly taken up by a vast Guard room in the form of a cross, whose four arms, ex-





CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD, FAÇADE FACING THE COSSON

tending north, south, east and west, between the corner towers, are united in the centre by the wonderful double stair. Three sections of the Guard room are now divided into stories, but the fourth, left open as in the original plan, extends up to a carved stone barrel-roof cut into squares in which the letter F and the salamander of Francis I alternate.

The famous stair, which rises through the centre of the building from ground to roof, is surmounted by an open lantern capped by the single fleur-de-lys that escaped the Revolution, the loftiest point of the château. It is formed by two spirals starting from different points and at different elevations and winding about the same central hollow shaft. This shaft, as well as the outer wall of support, is of open carved stone-work, and thus, although two people may pass up and down eternally without ever meeting, they will constantly catch flying and tantalizing glimpses of one another across the intervening well.

The one overmastering impression made upon the mind by Chambord is that of space, vast, limitless space. As one wanders through the great empty Guard rooms stretching away to the four points of the compass, through the interminable wings with their four hundred and forty rooms and fifty staircases, through the intricate network of buildings on the roof—a veritable little town in itself—it seems impossible that any sane person should ever have planned such a place merely as a hunting seat; yet that is what Francis I built it for, and the sole use to which he ever put it. In 1539 the Emperor, Charles V, was entertained there, and found such good sport that he stayed on for five days *pour la délectation de la chasse aux daims.* Six years later Francis returned, this time hoping to find distraction for himself in his favorite pastime from the black care and failing health that were settling down upon him. He lin-

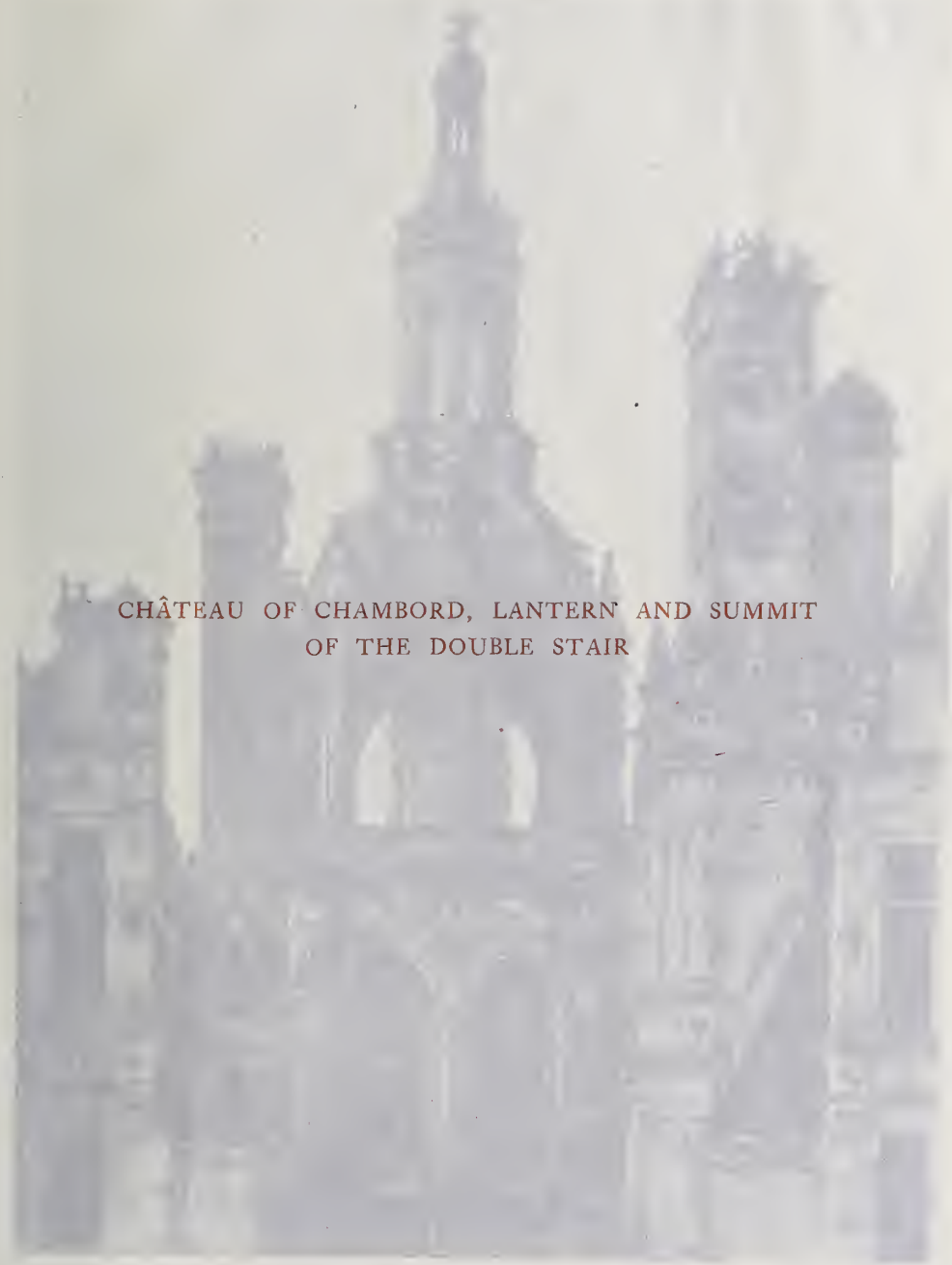
gered on for several melancholy months, taking no pleasure in anything but the society of his adoring sister, Margaret, who, as soon as she heard of her brother's condition, hastened to Chambord with a little suite of artists and men of letters whose conversation she hoped might still have power to interest the moody King. Francis, it is said, gave vent one day to his disillusionment by scratching the distich:

Souvent femme varie
Mal habile qui s'y fie.

on a pane of glass in the study of his private suite, where it remained until one day when Louis XIV smashed the pane to satisfy the vanity of Louise de la Vallière.

Notwithstanding the additions he made to the château, Henry II came there but little, and his sons and Henry IV still less. In 1626 Louis XIII gave Chambord, together with the county of Blois and the duchies of Orléans and Chartres, to his brother, Gaston of Orléans, in reward for the betrayal by the latter of his friends of the Chalais conspiracy[1] and for agreeing to marry Mlle. de Montpensier. Some of the conspirators were executed, others died in prison, and Gaston lost his wife in the year succeeding their marriage, but none of these events appear to have made even a passing impression upon him. It is said of him that "his vivacity was something quite extraordinary. When he was no longer young his servants had to button his clothes on the run. He spun and pirouetted continually, one hand thrust in his pocket, his cap pulled over one ear, and always whistling." His daughter, the "Grande Mademoiselle," tells in her Memoirs of a visit she paid as a child to her father at Chambord, and of the characteristic reception he gave her. "Monsieur," who was at the top of the double stair when the

[1] See p. 282 (Note 2).



CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD, LANTERN AND SUMMIT
OF THE DOUBLE STAIR



little girl arrived, called to her to come to him. As she flew up one flight her frolicsome parent ran down the other; puzzled, she gave chase only to find when she reached the bottom that he was again at the top. "Monsieur laughed heartily to see me run so fast in the hope of catching him, while I," adds the little maiden sedately, "was glad that Monsieur was so well amused."

With the death of Gaston of Orléans Chambord reverted to the Crown, and in 1660 Louis XIV paid a visit there with his bride, the Infanta Maria Theresa. They had been married at St. Jean de Luz and were making a royal progress through the country accompanied by the entire Court. Louis had never been to Chambord before; he examined the entire building and came to the astonishing conclusion that it was too small! Plans were made to enlarge it by the addition of an *avant-cour* surrounded by two wings and a grill, but the foundations only of one of the wings were laid, and on these Marshal Saxe later erected barracks for his Uhlans.

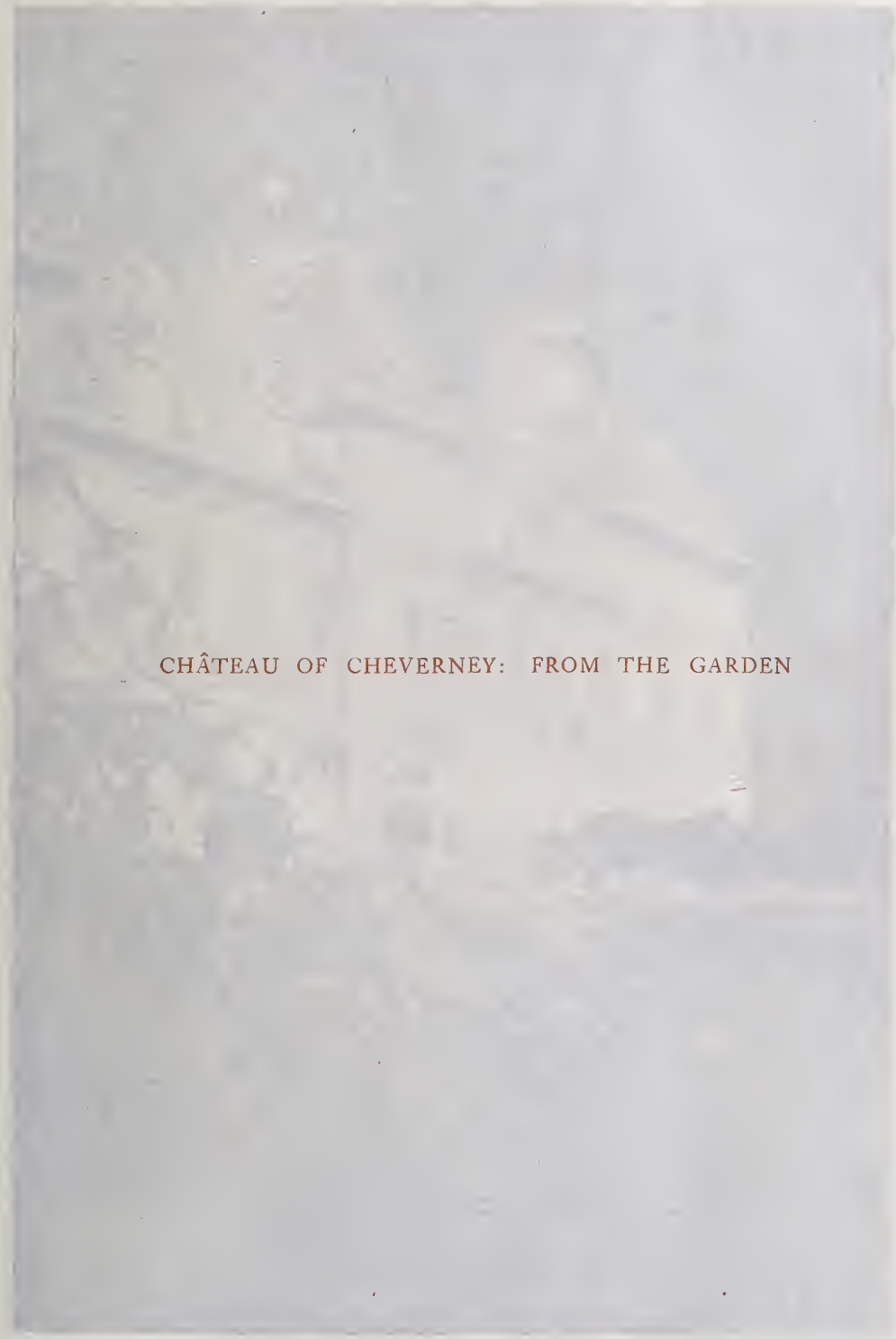
Louis XIV came frequently to Chambord for hunting, throughout his reign, and when there always provided royally for the entertainment of his Court. The daily routine included a hunt, followed by a banquet, then the King's reception from 6 to 10, and a ball to wind up with. One of the wings of the Guard room was fitted up as a theatre, with the royal box backing against the double stair. Here Molière gave the first representations of "Pourceaugnac" and the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme." Everyone had been agog over the recent visit of some Turks to Paris, and the King thought it would be amusing to have them represented on the stage. Molière was told, therefore, to write a play introducing Turks, and the "Bourgeois Gentilhomme" was the result. The impression made by

the first representation was disheartening. The King sat through the entire performance without moving a muscle, and the audience, of course, followed suit. The second performance, five days later, came off no better, and Molière, half dead with anxiety, was hardly able to appear at the supper afterwards. He could see the courtiers nudging one another, and whispering together that his powers were evidently exhausted: he was no longer amusing. Suddenly the King began to talk about the play, saying it was the most laughable thing he had ever seen in his life, quite the best that Molière had yet written. In an instant all was changed and the courtiers crowded about the fortunate author, congratulating him on his brilliant success!

When the Court drove down to Chambord in the autumn of 1684 there was much secret comment and conjecture aroused by the unexpected sight of Madame de Maintenon, meek and self-effacing as usual, seated up beside the Dauphine in the King's carriage, while Madame de Montespan, with her three children, was relegated to one of the carriages of the suite. This was, in fact, just about the date of the secret marriage between the King and Madame de Maintenon.

Louis XIV paid one more visit to Chambord, but after that the château was left to forty years of abandonment and neglect; then, in 1725, Louis XV gave it as a residence to his father-in-law, Stanislas Leczinska, driven out of Poland by the Elector of Saxony.

This exiled King lived contentedly at Chambord for eight years. He liked nothing better than to potter about among the country-people, standing godfather for their babies and advising them as to the management of their farms and their families. He injured the appearance of the château by filling



CHÂTEAU OF CHEVERNEY: FROM THE GARDEN


Jules Pyérin

in the moats, which he conceived to be unsanitary, and by obliterating the terraces, thereby giving the building its present squat appearance.

Twelve years later, when Stanislas had gone to take possession of the duchies of Bar and Lorraine, given him in satisfaction of his claim on Poland, Louis XV handed over Chambord to a very different kind of tenant, Hermann Maurice, Marshal Saxe, the natural son of Augustus II of Saxony and the Countess of Königsmark. Here, after the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, the Marshal established himself with two regiments of Uhlans and a throng of gay companions, and for two years the entire country-side was enlivened by echoes of the roystering life at the château. Six cannons captured from the enemy guarded the entrance; horses ran wild through the park, trained like those of a modern fire-brigade to race to their stalls at the fanfare of the trumpets, to be caparisoned for the daily review. The great court resounded to the beating of drums and the clash of arms, and the forest echoed to the thunder of the horses' hoofs as the Uhlans charged an imaginary enemy. Hunting, feasting and revelry followed each other without intermission, and then, in a moment, all the gay life ceased. On 30th November, 1750, the Marshal died, worn out by forty-two years of unmeasured fatigue and dissipation. For ten days the cannons boomed forth every quarter of an hour, while for thirty days more the body of the victor of Fontenoy lay exposed upon a bed of state surrounded by sixteen standards captured in battle.

This closed the brilliant annals of Chambord. Forty years of neglect followed by the Revolution reduced the château to such a state of dreary ruin that, although Napoleon I gave it to Charles IV of Spain, whom he had despoiled of a kingdom,

the Spanish King never took any steps to claim it, and some years later the château and domain were presented to the Emperor's Chief of Staff, Marshal Berthier. After Berthier's death his widow, first cutting down all the timber, offered the estate for sale, and in 1821 a public subscription was started to purchase it and present it as the gift of the nation to the infant Duke of Bordeaux, grandson of Charles X and heir presumptive to the ancient monarchy. Notwithstanding a furious pamphlet launched by Paul Louis Courier, denouncing the project, it was carried into effect; the required sum, 1,542,000 francs, was raised and the domain and château of Chambord were purchased and offered to the guardians of the young Prince. Yet so bitter was the party feeling aroused by Courier's allusions to the elder and younger branches of the Royal House, that Charles X hesitated several years before he dared to accept the gift in his grandson's name, and would hardly allow the young Prince's mother to stop at Chambord for a few days in 1828, when she was passing through Blois.[1]

Two years later came the Revolution of July and the fall of the Bourbons, after which the Duke of Bordeaux dropped his royal title and assumed the style of Count of Chambord. An effort was made by the Government to sequester the estate, and it was only after twenty years of litigation that the Count of Chambord was definitely established in his rights. The only visit that he ever paid to the château was in 1871, when he spent two nights there and wrote a letter to the French people

[1] Courier declared that the impressions the young Prince would receive from the walls of Chambord could be nothing but pernicious. Were it a question of raising money wherewith to educate him, that would indeed be worth while. The Duke of Chartres, he observed (son of the Duke of Orléans, head of the younger branch of the royal House), was at college, receiving a good, sound, monarchical education, and at the same time learning certain eternal verities of which his ancestors had known nothing.





CHÂTEAU OF CHAMBORD: LA SALLE DES GARDES

which was practically the death-blow to his cause. On his death, in 1883, Chambord passed to its present proprietors, the Duke of Parma and the Count of Bardi, sons of the Duchess of Parma, the only sister of the Count of Chambord.

The château is kept in repair, but there has been no attempt to restore the interior to anything like a habitable state. Chambord has now the frigid look of a place that has long since ceased to feel the pulse of life beating within its walls, and one realizes in looking at the château that the day of such monumental abodes has passed away forever.

After leaving Chambord the road runs for several miles through the forest of Boulogne, then emerges on a wind-swept plain, dips into the valley of the Conon, and brings one at last to the remote little village of Cheverney, the most stirring events of whose sleepy existence probably consist in the arrival of visitors to the château.

A stone gateway opposite the church opens on a short avenue, beyond which stands the house. Before it stretches a wide, sunlit space ornamented with flower-beds and conventionally clipped trees in tubs.

Cheverney is an inhabited château; inhabited, moreover, by descendants of the man who first built upon the site, in the XVth century, one Jacques Hurault, Sieur of Grange, Cheverney, Vibray, and Huriel. His most eminent descendant was the minister of Henry IV, Philippe Hurault, known as the Chancellor Cheverney, whose son built the present château in 1634. Some generations later the property passed from the Hurault family, and after changing hands many times was bought back in 1825 by the Marquis de Hurault de Vibray, whose descendants still own it.

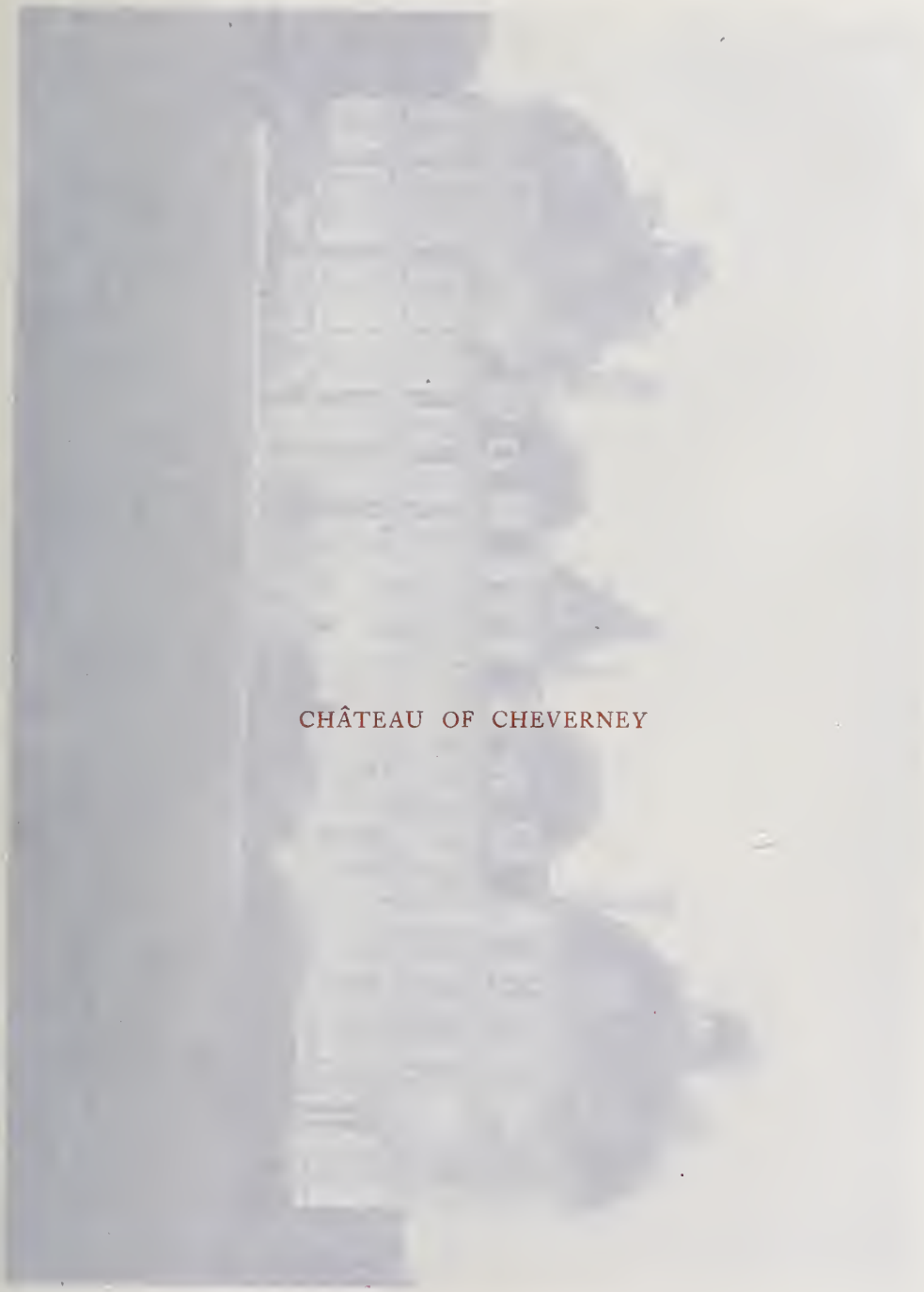
The château is a mellow, dignified building in the style of

Louis XIV. At both ends of the façade rise square pavilions surmounted by rounded roofs and lanterns. Between the windows of the second floor are a row of niches holding busts, and the broken line of the roofs is further relieved by dormers and circular windows.

Within, the decorations and furnishings are all in a style of rich and sober elegance. There are series of panel-pictures by Jean Mosnier, a native of Blois who flourished in the early part of the XVIIth century, sculptured chimney-pieces belonging to the same period, painted ceilings and portraits by Clouet, Porbus, and other artists of the French school. A stately stair of carved stone leads to the apartments on the second floor called "the King's suite," containing, besides many fine old tapestries and paintings, a travelling chest of Henry IV and an archaic-looking bedstead, perhaps the "old bed with its old hangings," which the Chancellor Cheverney could in no wise be induced tc give up.

Not a single episode of note, not a tragedy, not a scandal is associated with the château of Cheverney. Its annals are of that simple type which, if they do not make history, do at least make happiness.

After reading of the wars and tumults, the murder and bloodshed, the intrigues and heart-breaks that have thrown their dark shadows athwart the walls of so many others of the châteaux, one is glad to carry away as a last impression the picture of this fair, stately mansion, standing amidst its lawns and flower-beds and bathed in the sweet sunshine.



CHÂTEAU OF CHEVERNEY

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